With the author's compliments

THE

Faith and Progress

OF

THE BRAHMO SOMAJ

BY

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TO THE REVERED SPIRIT

OF

Rajah Ram Mohun Roy,

Who, in the twilight of error, evil, and unreason, first lighted the holy lamp of eclectic Theism; who first cast on the wild waters of Hindu Society the bread which, in the writer and others, has been returned a hundredfold, who worked, suffered, and died far away, not knowing the fruit of his labour,

This Volume is inscribed

With honor, affection, and loyalty by his grateful servant,

THE AUTHOR.

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PART I.—SPECULATIVE AND DOCTRINAL.

PART II.—DEVOTIONAL AND PRACTICAL.

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PREFACE.

THE absence of a book, which can give a tolerably complete idea of the principles of the Brahmo Somaj, has been often felt and expressed. It is to remove this want as far as possible that the following pages are offered to the public. They contain the substance of what the author has written from time to time during the last fifteen years. Much of what originally appeared has been recast, and almost re-written. A great deal also has been retained with fewer alterations. An attempt to systematize and arrange the whole, so as to answer the main object of the book, has been carefully made. With what success it remains to be seen.

The ruling ambition of the Brahmo Somaj is to bring back the human mind to re-discover, re-model, and re-embody the eternal essence of religion. It is eminently a

church of reform. Pure abstract Theism, which forms the groundwork of every known system of faith, no doubt represents that essence in its philosophical and ethical simplicity. But the real problem that has to be solved by the world just now does not lie in the line of speculation and analysis, wherein comparatively few can take part, but in the practical presentation of rediscovered spirituality. For individuals it may suffice to find the Unspeakable Presence in the secret sanctuary of the soul. But the Church of God must declare Him, invoke His infinity to reanimate the forms of time and space, of thought, life and aspiration. Practical Religion must, from the sure ground of experience, know how to respond to the never-ceasing wants, miseries, and instincts which kindle a perpetual thirst in man's heart. The Spirit alone, in inscrutable ways, can satisfy that thirst.

The Brahmo Somaj ventures to declare some of those ways. Its claims to the recognition of the world lie in the fact of its religion being an actual history of its own career. Its progress is absolutely providential. Its principles are the unforeseen results of its devotions. Its position is the unforeseen consequence of events. It is the spontaneous and unforced growth of the century. At every turning point of its inner history it bears ample marks of the mysterious Handwriting that engraves the everlasting scriptures of the spirit-world. The present writer has only tried to follow those marks, though it be with faltering steps. He has tried, with reverent hands, to unveil and interpret the active Spirit of Providence in the faith and progress of that Mother Church in whose bosom he has grown up from early youth.

The development of the principles of the Brahmo Somaj proves three things:

Firstly, Theism is not a religion of destructive criticism and barren protest. The Brahmo Somaj passed through that Shahara of negatives more than thirty years ago, and found its first resting place under the protective shadow of affirmative principles about the year 1850. Secondly, Theism is not a religion of abstract conceptions, exercising little or no force on the heart and character. Theism is devotional, it is moral, it is spiritual. It stirs every depth of human nature, unseals the fountain of the deepest and most sacred inner poetry, inflames the sternest resolutions to attack and conquer evil, individual as well as social, and inspires doctrines that are most reasonable and catholic. Thirdly, Theism is no mere Natural Religion which embodies the investigations of solitary thinkers, or a college of theologians, baptized, by courtesy, with the surname of a Church.

Like other religions, Theism professes to receive a Revelation from the Spirit of the Living God, who moves and acts in the soul of man's soul. No skill of finite thought or phraseology can penetrate into the eternal depths of pure unconditioned Being. The Spirit alone can reveal the Spirit, and dispense His own light. Because that light *has* been dispensed in our hearts, therefore we have the courage to declare that Theism is a dispensation of God. Yea that it is the NEW DISPENSATION. To ascend to the heights of God the theist has not to labour up the steep ladder of analogies, or disentangle the mystic web of the paradoxes of nature. The God of the Brahmo Somaj is the self-revealing All-Force, undemonstrable, undeniable, whom everyone beholds, but few recognize. He is the profound ancient "I AM," the all-compelling personality, of whom the Hindu sage declares nothing

more can be said than *Asteeti* (He Is). He is the Light, Soul, Heart of all things; and every fibre of the creation is worked out of His attributes as a piece of garment out of the warp and woof. God is in all, all is in God. Nature semi-transparently veils Him, and suggests a further point of departure into the depths of His being and purpose. The unbalanced intellect of natural religion, in taking up that suggestion, has sunk into fathomless pantheism or hopeless abstraction. It is the province of Faith to wing the further flight. And it is by Faith that the Brahmo Somaj beholds the deep things of God. The relations of life and eternity are re-established by Him in conscious inspiration and spiritual contact. Human existence in every part thus becomes a God-sanctioned Reality, whose significance is infinite. Life, with all its relations, in God, is the only Truth—all else is vain. It is to illustrate

these things from the faith and progress of the Brahmo Somaj that the following pages are offered to the public. The diffidence and hesitation felt in doing so are perhaps natural. If the attempt has come short of the wish, the writer can say, with a greater man than himself, that "it is the head that is weak, not the heart that is wanting."

Difference between Deism and the Brahmo Somaj.

THE prevailing unbelief in the established orders of religion in this country and elsewhere generally takes the form of the acknowledgment of one God, with certain other vague notions which are much more negative than definable in their character. The religion of the Brahmo Somaj includes, it is true, every form of monotheism wherever found, but it is itself a very clear and definite system of faith. In justice to itself, the Brahmo Somaj has been obliged to recognize the difference that exists on this subject between itself, and those who rest contented with a merely intellectual recognition of some primary religious truths. The religion of the Brahmo Somaj is called Theism, as distinguished from the Deism which characterizes the belief of the other description.

What is then the difference between Deism and Theism? We proceed to answer this question as we can from the stand-point occupied by the Brahmo Somaj. Deism professes to

believe God in the abstract, to worship God in intellectual forms, and obey the abstract commandments of God in "the laws of duty." "God in the abstract" means the conception of a Supreme Being from such facts of the external world, or the mind of man, as offer themselves before the reflective eye of reason. There are kinds of Deism in which no worship is recognized, and no distinction maintained between religion and mere morality. The Theism of the Bramo Somaj professes to believe God, not only as he manifests himself in the facts of outward nature, in works of design, or power, or goodness, but chiefly as he chooses to make his revelations in the soul, in the events of the life of man, and in the records of God's dealings with man preserved in the scriptures of the world. The Bramo perceives these revelations by the *spiritual faculty*, or faith, that is in him. Theism loves God for the *positive proofs* of his love afforded to man in the beneficences and beauties of the world at large, but specially for the revelations of Divine love made within the soul in response to prayer and faith,

in the events and trials of single lives, and in the teachings, lives, and deaths of holy men in every age and country. Theism observes the purposes, and obeys the commandments of God as written on the tablets of our moral and spiritual consciousness, as taught in the scriptures of the religions of nations, as carried out in the lives of good men in all ages, and as revealed to us on special emergencies. The creed of Deism or Rationalism is in the speculative and indefinite code of mere Reason; the creed of Theism is in the written, spoken, or spiritually perceived language of faith, the deep utterances of the spirit fired by God, always evidenced by the light of inspiration, often illustrated by the examples of saints, sometimes sealed by the blood of prophets. Deism is of the world, and has either no faith, or very vague faith in heaven and eternity. Theism is of heaven, eternity is its goal and necessary faith; it has no part in the self-forgetful carnal anxieties of the world. The advancement and good work of the world are its occupation, but by no means its only aim. Its objects and pursuits are com-

bined to bring about the spiritual regeneration of man, the purification of the body and the spirit. The Bramo Somaj takes little account of outward propriety, or utility, and seeks the salvation of the very being itself. Deism is the religion of the intellect; there is not much heart, or soul, or life in it. There is not much faith or prayer in it. All its faith is the faith of the reasoner and the philosopher. All its prayer is the formal utterance of some intellectual abstractions. It does not believe in any inspiration or direct communion with the spirit of God. The faith of the Brahmo Somaj is real, living, and fiery. It is God-vision and God-consciousness; it is faith in God as the Life of the universe; faith in God as the indwelling Sustainer and guiding Spirit of the soul, the Inspirer and Source of every thing good and holy in man's existence; faith in God as holding wonderful spiritual dealings with individuals and nations having for their common purpose the salvation of the whole human race. Theism is God in Nature, God in the Soul, God in History. Deism, by belief in an abstract God, tries

to conceive Him apart from the universe and out of it. Deism holds that the universe is a machine, going by automatic laws with which God has no concern. Deism does not believe in *Dispensations* of that *Special Providence* which God puts forth to meet the peculiar necessities of individual men, or of religious communities, as these necessities arise on the different occasions of life. Rationalism does not recognize these dispensations as facts, or as indispensable to religious life and progress, or if made to recognize them in any startling instance, forgets them, and does not care to place lasting trust in them for purposes of salvation. Deism is independent of the revelations made of God's nature and purposes from time to time by such holy men, or prophets, or his chosen children, as he honors with special inspiration with that object, over and above other human beings.

How far can Deism teach us to believe, love, and obey God is another important question. In going to answer it we cannot assert that Deism teaches no faith, no worship, and no

obedience, but only so far as to satisfy the demands of worldly utility and intellectual completeness. Rationalistic speculations sharpen the intellect; it may sometimes excite the emotions, and now and then produce some morality. But then this intellectual advancement very frequently begets self-sufficiency and contempt of other systems of belief, or is confounded into scepticism and secret uncertainty. These emotions are quite unsure in their occasions and intervals; they are not unoften debased into mere sentimentality and self-worship. This morality is quite distinct from the abiding and internal purity of the heart; it frequently melts away before strong temptations. It is perfectly impossible for Deism or Rationalism to be the religion of life and death, the religion of peace and purity, the religion which disarms temptation and delivers the soul from evil. Deism is a system of thought, or a formula of belief. Theism is a living spiritual faith, fervent personal piety, and a discipline for purity and salvation.

How then does the Theism of the Brahmo

Somaj affect the intellect, the feeling, and the life? The advancement of the intellect is a good thing, but one cannot depend upon his intellect for the perfection of his faith, or the salvation of his soul. The decisions of the intellect in matters of religion are frequently changeable; but true spiritual wisdom is unchangeable. The intellect is an element in it, but certainly not the whole of it. The theist understands, above all things, his intellectual littleness, and trembles as he feels the grandeur of the Psalmist's interrogation: "Cans't thou by searching find out God? Cans't thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" The more he knows of matter and of mind, the more he understands the solemnity of human existence and destiny, the greater is his wonder and humility—wonder, because of profound insight into the infinite realities which human nature reveals—humility, because of his absolute unworthiness to approach or attain them by the intellect. This sense of personal unworthiness and reverence for God becomes his element. By the exercise of the intellect alone

the theist feels he cannot attain to the blessed-ness of religious life. He examines the reach and the power of his intellect; he knows what it can do; and he knows what it cannot do. But where his intellect stops and cannot proceed his faith proceeds. Nay, his intellect points out that there is in him the higher faculty of faith for seeing and hearing the realities of Divine nature, or the relations of God with man and nature. His self-knowing intellect is humbled and matured into wisdom, and does not aspire to know and decide things which are beyond its province. In the knowledge of divine things the intellect prefers to be dumb, and yields itself to the guidance of faith and inspiration. The intellect sometimes suggests, but faith, prayer, and inspiration must reveal the deep truths of religion. The enlightened intellect is unpre-tending. It knows it is not the organ for the perception of supersensible realities. The strong godly intellect counsels the theist to submit to his God unquestioningly and entirely for guidance in the path of salvation. His intellect, therefore, surrenders itself with resignation to Divine

guidance, and has to fear no darkness. It yields itself also to the counsels of higher experience, the gentle but authoritative precepts of the sainted human brotherhood, left to earth as a holy legacy of departed prophets and good men. As truth after truth dawns to it in the resplendent world of faith, it falls down kneeling before the altar of the Great Teacher, the Infinitely Real and Faithful God, and offers long and continued thanksgiving.

In the domain of piety the theist treads his way with equal humility. He cannot and tries not to rely upon his own feelings, because he knows they are very inconstant, deceptive, and treacherous. He understands the distinction between sentimentality and piety, feels that neither his tears nor his tenderness can carry him to heaven. He is aware that a man cannot love God, and, at the same time, love such actions and motives as He hates. He is aware that a man who says he loves God, and at the same time hates man, is a liar. But for all this he never neglects to cultivate his feelings—those spontaneous flowers of heaven which God has

planted by the waterside of human nature. He has seen the loving hand of God in his life. The particular proofs of his Father's tenderness are patent before his eyes. He cannot deny them, cannot explain them away, cannot find out how he has deserved them, and can discover no means how to discharge the obligation. Those circumstances which to others are unimportant and ordinary, convey to him, through their unperceived under-current, such a flow of Divine love and care as to make him speechless with love. The impossible has become possible to him; that which he had never ventured to hope or imagine has actually taken place; the Lord has worked miracles in his life. He finds no sympathy in the world, he seeks none. He is contented to stand in mute adoration, and falls prostrate before his Father's feet. Narrow and hard as he feels his own heart to be, he has found no parallel to his Father's love and tender watchfulness. They are ever pressing before his eye like the light of day. When he calls God his Father, his Mother, his soul is thrilled to feel the glory of the privilege, and his tears fall

when he thinks how unworthy he is of it. O, his whole nature overflows, heaven and earth are filled with the sweetness and sanctity of that relation. Talk of love to God! Is it not a rapture, an ecstatic excitement, an utter inebriation to love God? Coldness of heart means death to the theist. Piety is a holy frenzy. There can be no love of God if it is not an all-devouring enthusiasm. Can he live one moment without it? He has perceived the fiery love of God to be the life of his life, the light of his eye, the strength of his character, the antidote against temptation, his only support in this world, his only hope hereafter. God alone can teach us how we may love Him. The theist wants to consecrate his entire body and soul to his Father's service, to place himself under absolute bondage to God, he wants to love God with his life. And how can he do so? God lacks nothing to need his service. Direct servitude, as between master and servant in this world, is not possible. He, therefore, seeks to serve his Father's children, his fellow beings, his brethren and sisters. He tries to discharge

the debt of his Father's love, by loving and devoting himself to the service of those whom he knows his Father loves. By loving those whom he can see, he learns to love Him whom he cannot see. This he perceives to be the law of his Father's household. Nor is this a mere theory with him. It is a matter of daily experience. He does all manner of good work. In every reform he takes part. His affection for men takes the form of active service. The more he could love his brethren and sisters in this world, with the pure, humble, strong, and self-denying love of heaven, the more was his love accepted before God, the more he could discover the mysteries of his Father's love, the more he could serve his fellow being with fidelity, diligence, and self-sacrifice. Like a sincere and devoted servant, without any hope of reward, nay in the midst of reproach and persecution, the more he served man, the more did his service seem acceptable before his Father's throne. He had attempted to serve his fellow beings in the best way he could; the world had denied his service, and treated him with un-

kindness. Even the credit of an honest servant the world grudged him. The Deist under such circumstances would become a misanthrope and a recluse. But the theist would not complain, he meekly bowed his head to every word and act of cruelty, because "he knew Whom he served." Often within his sincere heart he had heard the loving and familiar voice cry: "Well-done my good and faithful servant!" Therefore he was never ashamed to humble himself before God and man, and, therefore, he was never loth to serve his fellow beings according to his capacity amidst all discouragement and ridicule. Humility and hard work are to him, as it were, the livery of his love, whereby he may always retain his gratitude and due relation to his Master; and why should he be ashamed of it? Thus, with increased intensity, he earnestly serves and strongly loves both man and God all the days of his life.

It cannot be denied that the most rationalistic movements have in these days an organization. Even the followers of Auguste Comte

have a so-called church. But the church of true theism is a divinely appointed body, headed and organized by the Spirit of God, and carried on by ministers and apostles who feel that they have been called to their respective work by the influence of the Spirit. Divine providence is daily present in that church, in all its members, guides all its functions, and directs all its operations. The constitution of such a church is developed out of its spiritual experiences, and formed along with its religion. The government of this church is carried on by the spirit of divine justice and love. Every man's position is determined by his work, character, and responsibility. The church of Deism is a society founded by the mutual consent of men on intellectual grounds. It is kept up under the plea of usefulness, and governed by rules, votes, committees, and such other agencies as govern all commercial, social, literary, or political movements. Men feel no calling from above, but are appointed, educated, paid, and directed in their work. The rationalistic church means nothing more than a local habitation of certain

opinions and social proceedings which may be devotional, or otherwise, according to the wish of the chief men.

Deism does not believe in inspiration. All duties and all devotions are the outcome of moral or intellectual reasoning combined with emotional excitement produced out of the ideas of propriety and impropriety previously acquired. Theism is the child of inspiration. It *beholds* God in spirit, and before his realized presence offers its devotions. It hears the voice of God in the soul in response to prayers, as well in the trials and duties of life. The theist walks by the direct and immediate commandment of God. Theism believes that God speaks to his servants now as much as he used to do in ancient times. It does not trust to reasoning, but in matters of spiritual necessity waits in prayer upon the living God, who resolves all difficulties, and points out the plain course of duty which, while it is faithfully discharged, means and opportunities arise which are felt to be divinely suggested.

Deism is negative, and delights in criticisms of the doctrines of other churches. It is destructive, and is always loud in declaring what it *does* not believe, because if it were to declare what it *does* believe, its catalogue of doctrines would be exceedingly small. Theism, on the other hand, does not find time to criticize and destroy other men's doctrines. It is occupied in stating and developing its own faith, in finding out the deep things of religion, of devotion, of character, faith, salvation, and holiness. It studies the doctrines of all religions with the object of gathering from them everything that is excellent. It is all-inclusive, and finds treasures of truth in other dispensations which God, from time to time, sent unto the world for the regeneration of mankind. But Deism being critical, is exclusive. Because whatever it cannot intellectually construe, it has to abandon. Theism, holding the equilibrium between reason, devotions, and faith, and being guided by the direct and living light of inspiration, discovers truth wherever it lies hidden. And therefore theism

enriches and multiplies itself from the resources and lights of the whole world.

Theism being positive is also popular. Deism being rationalistic is necessarily abstract and unintelligible. Theism is popular because it has great personal centres in the prophets of the world. It can point to sainted and sanctified men as examples of faith and righteousness. Its principles are clearly discernible in unmistakable personalities that shine in the history of the world, and in the hearts of the faithful. Deism, weak in faith, hesitates to trust in the great souls whom God sends among men to lead them aright. It has and can refer to no personal centres. It therefore ceases to be popular, and though by borrowing from the outward observances of the church of God, it may make a temporary display, the spirit not being present in these externals, they soon cease to draw the popular mind, and Deism dies in its cold, lifeless intellectualism. But Theism, from its eternal simplicity, can appeal to men through all things, through their minds, through their senses, through their imagination, feelings, and

all the different departments of their nature. Theism can adapt itself to all understandings, to all conditions, to all trainings, tendencies, and tastes. Theism searches out all the resources, all the traditions, all the activities and aptitudes of human nature, and establishes its kingdom on their foundation, while Deism operates upon the poor unaided intellect alone and starves itself in its isolation.

The Development of the Brahmo Somaj.

ALMOST every religion, which has largely influenced the destinies of mankind, contains within itself principles of development that act together to save it from destruction, when the forms of doctrine and ritual in which men try to embody its spirit have fallen into disuse and decay. Hinduism is a singular instance of this. In different periods of the history of India, Hinduism has associated itself with the circumstances and influences of the times, and reproduced itself in new forms, more powerful, more vivid, than before, of thought and belief, of feeling, worship, and action. From early to comparatively modern times, these revivals have been many and marked; and the great peculiarity which belongs to them all is that they have more or less vigorously protested against the prevailing polytheism and priestcraft of the country. Not one of these revivals, however, has been more remarkable in point of producing social and moral changes than the

religious reformation of NANAK in the Punjab and of CHAITANYA in Bengal. Both these movements belong to the sixteenth century, to that part of it when the power of the Mahomedans was at its highest in India, and when Catholic Europe was quivering with excitement at the bugle notes of her heroic reformers. Both these movements were the natural results of the contact of strict Mahomedan monotheism with the fertile and susceptible nature of the Hindus. They were the forerunners of the Brahmo Somaj.

It is a great mistake to suppose that the worship of the one true God, as opposed to idolatry, was at all times unknown in India. Those who really know anything of the spirit and principles of the religious thought of old Aryan sages have contradicted this charge. On the contrary, the fact is, that the love of unity in the Indian mind has been so great that the honored ancestors of the Aryan race—a race, the spreading branches of which in the East and in the West now overshadow the whole civilized globe—not only recognized the abso-

lute unity of the creative Spirit, but in their realization of this truth ran to the opposite extreme of spiritualizing the whole universe, and viewed it but as one among the many manifestations of the Supreme Essence. The ancient scriptures of our country are dear to us, for nothing so much as for the depth, beauty, and spirituality of their monotheism. That monotheism may not certainly be as complete, harmonious, as ours, but that the sages and prophets of Aryan India believed in the simple glorious creed of primitive theism, the unity and integrity of the Divine nature, does not admit of a doubt. And it is for this reason that often and often, whenever a religious reformer has been born in our land to vindicate the worship of the one true God, he has been able, without considerable difficulty, to refer back the present degenerate mind of the Hindu race to the pure primitive faith of its forefathers, and that monotheistic revivals, both before and at the time of the Mahomedans, were national movements in all their enthusiasm and success.

The origin of the Brahmo Somaj was the

result of a vigorous attempt to revive the old monotheistic worship of the country. The founder of the institution, Rajah Ram Mohun Roy, made repeated and unanswerable appeals to the ancient writings of the Hindus to prove that idolatry was false and of modern growth, but that the venerable fathers of our race worshipped the *One God without a second* एकमेवाद्वितीयं. So far the Brahmo Somaj was only like one of those monotheistic revivals which had been brought about before by the influence of Mahomedan propagandism upon the unitarian tendencies of the Hindu mind. But there was another influence active in the formation of the Somaj,—one that was absent from all similar reforms ever before. That was the influence of Christianity. Christians had lived in India nearly for a hundred years, not in vain; their ministers and missionaries, their tracts and papers, and above all their Bible, had travelled over with them, and had certainly made some impression upon the susceptible mind of the Hindu. The founder of the Brahmo Somaj represented fully the intelligence

of his race, and upon his strong religious instincts the precepts of Jesus acted, as much as the *Koran* or the *Vedas* had ever done before. In the establishment of the Brahmo Somaj, therefore, Christianity had a great though indirect share, and formed that unconscious, spontaneous, and real alliance with the national spirit of religion which has developed itself in the career and progress of the Somaj during the space of more than the last fifty years.

Now, abstract speculations on the nature and attributes of the One Supreme God have been perhaps more or less frequent in every country and age. In spite of such speculations, polytheism and idolatry have been prevalent among mankind. This kind of belief in the unity and spirituality of the Godhead has been, always individual, isolated, and exclusive. It has never affected, no one has ever attempted to affect through its medium, the sympathies and souls of men, to establish through it a community, a brotherhood, a temple, a home, a saving religion, a Divine dispensation wherein men may be united with their Father in heaven,

and with each other in peace and good-will on earth. Such abstract monotheism has therefore been ineffectual, and has been always set aside with the somewhat contemptuous name of Deism. We do not much value a mere belief in the unity of God's nature and attributes; the views expressed on this subject are often unpractical and useless. In order to make this belief permanent and effective, in order that these views may abide, be practical, and true, they must be embodied in a CHURCH. The first interesting fact that we notice in the history of the Brahmo Somaj is its development into a Church. It is this which distinguishes it from all previous deistic speculations; it is this which distinguishes it from Hinduism, which never teaches the idea of a common and united worship by all classes in theism.

The Trust Deed of the Brahmo Somaj, which was drawn up in the year 1830, claims for itself the distinct position of a Theistic Church—the First Theistic Church, we may venture to point out in the world. But what is a church without a true, earnest, and enthusiastic Mem-

bership? There are many churches which exist as formal institutions, but in which men do not take that deep and real interest which proceeds from the harmony of feeling, the unanimity of views, and oneness in the great objects of life. Such churches are powerless for good; they neither improve the relations of individuals, nor preserve the most valuable interests of society, and they cannot even prolong their own existence. They seek to protect themselves with worldly influences, which fail in the end, and demoralize those who depend upon them. This was the state of the Brahmo Somaj soon after its establishment. The next important fact, therefore, that we discover is the establishment of a regular Membership in the year 1843. A covenant was established, in which signatures were appended to a solemn declaration of faith, and thus was formed the nucleus of that society which has subsequently developed itself into such goodly and natural proportions. But even the Membership of a church, when it has been securely established, has its attendant difficulties. Earnest men

in going to seek the progress and perpetuity of their church make a wrong use of their zeal, and try to overlook or silence those demands and dignities of human nature which belong to the freeborn spirit. A sound church organization ought not to repress but foster and encourage them within wholesome limits. In every church Membership the two elements of harmony (or mutual subordination), and individuality (or freedom of private opinion) ought to find equal field for exercise. In endeavouring to secure unanimity men have often tried to crush the holy and heavenly gift of liberty in the soul, to fetter the wings of lofty thought, to arrest the flight of inspired imagination, and check the manly independence of life. And in endeavouring, on the other hand, to secure full freedom of the spirit, men have often broken through every sacred organization, set aside natural restraints and mutual control, and pulverized society into factious atoms without coherence, principle, or progress. A sound, abiding, saving church is equally impossible under both these conditions. Perhaps this has been

the bane of most existing churches. And this was exactly the kind of difficulty which befell the members of the Brahmo Somaj later on, about the year 1850. Meeting to discuss their principles, that they might find unanimity, they differed and disagreed amongst themselves, and their difference grew so serious that Devendra Nath Tagore, the leader of the institution, left his work in despondency, and the very existence of the Somaj was endangered.

Nevertheless about this time they could not but feel the great necessity of having some definite principles of belief. No religious community can long continue to exist without a common ground of belief. This introduces again the question of harmony and individuality. Creed-making has been the cause of ruin to many religions, and still no church is possible without settled forms of faith. When the Brahmo Somaj gave up believing in the infallibility of the *Vedas* about the year 1850, this was the difficulty which had to be solved. The solution has taken us many years; nor can we say that we have completely or successfully solved the problem yet. All that

has been found out is this : The ground of doctrinal unity among men ought, in the first place, to be as simple as possible. Nothing has such a tendency to multiply itself as theology. The constant accumulation of doctrines leads not only to make a religion incomprehensible to the untutored masses, who by far form the majority of mankind, but also by a constant straining of the power of the intellect and controversial wrangling dries up the emotions and the spiritual instincts of the soul. The principles of belief in the Brahmo Somaj are, therefore, few and simple. They are the plain, natural, God-given intuitions of man's soul, which are found in every country, among all classes and all nations. In the second place, this creed ought to be catholic and universal. Theologies of different religions exclude each other, and beget that sectarian bigotry which has been the reproach of religious men in all ages. The third and last requisite of a creed ought to be its progressiveness. In precision and scientific accuracy of thought, in reconciliation with the highest philosophy and reason, in the formation of moral

principles, in the receptivity of spiritual influences from all mankind, the progressiveness of the Brahmó Somaj must be illimitable. And its development has proved this fact. The great battle between theology and science can never terminate unless the religious beliefs of mankind are so constituted, and so invested with the spirit of progress and spontaneity as to include, embrace, and welcome the truths of all departments of human speculation and research. If religion lacks the simplicity, the elasticity, the capacity, the life, and the strength to adapt itself to philosophy and science, philosophy shall progress, and faith lag behind. The principles of the Brahmo Somaj, few, simple, and catholic as they are, have been formed with this direct object in view, hence every discovery that science makes, every triumph that philosophy achieves, every fresh improvement of thought or research, only adds to the firmness, coherence, and the testimonies of the Brahmo Somaj. The opening of the Brahmo School in the year 1859 led gradually to the formation of these principles. The great

doctrine vigorously set forth about this time was the doctrine of Intuitions, on which it was pointed out, the Brahmo Somaj was founded. This position was greatly ridiculed at the time, specially by a narrow sect of Christians; but it has silently come to be recognized at last. The very life of religious development in the Brahmo Somaj is harmony with all truth. And the doctrine of Intuitions meant the harmony of all mental science. It meant a psychological ecclecticism to which every school of philosophy contributed its quota. From this harmony other harmonies have in time sprung up. The development of these harmonies has taken us a long time, and may take longer time yet. Its results may be summed up thus: The Natural and intuitional basis of religion; Fatherhood of God; Brotherhood of man; Eternal life; Harmony of all Scriptures; Harmony of all forms of spiritual culture; Honor to all inspired saints and prophets.

But granting that the organization and the principles of a church are sound, what is there to make it living and attractive? A creed, how-

ever perfect, must in the end appear abstract; a church membership, however well bound, must grow indifferent, if in the church there be not that deep life of devotional feeling which is the only stimulus and the only reward of religion. Hence the emotional development of the Brahmo Somaj commenced from the well-known rupture in 1866. The blessed practice of prayer, the free and real communion of the soul with the spirit of God, forms the centre, not only of the individual religious life, but the corporate life of the Church. Emotion is the soul of worship. If spiritual communion were better cultivated, the religions of the world would be sweeter, purer, more living, and more successful than they now are. But men lose their hunger for piety in their rage for doctrines, and divine worship in many churches is merely formal. The devotional intensity of the Brahmo Somaj is perhaps the most principal cause of its success and attraction in India. Even those who radically differ from the Brahmos in theology and practical reforms are drawn by their prayers and

hymns, and regularly attend their temple of worship, with the only view of joining them to sing the glory and love of God. The devotional festivals which concentrate these emotional forces were first intro duced into the Brahmo Somaj in 1867. They generally last for a period of twelve hours, during which there is almost continual prayer, meditations, and the singing of hymns, interspersed with spiritual conversation, and the reading of texts.

It has been found, however, that this holy life of devotion and spirituality can neither be cultivated nor kept up if men's lives are unworthy of their principles and prayers. Nothing does so much harm to the cause of a religion as the painful inconsistency in life which its members show to the precepts and spirit of their system. And nowhere is this inconsistency so apt to grow as in India. Most of the ideas and institutions of the present state of society are against the dictates of a pure monotheistic religious reform, and conformable to idolatrous faith. In attempting, therefore, to purify the convictions and views of the present generation of

Hindus, the Brahmo Somaj has had to inculcate the severest and most self-sacrificing principles of personal purity. What is devotion worth if it is unrefined by the heavenly fire of a holy life? It is better that a man should be pure in heart, and strictly righteous in his dealings, than that he should preach ideas which he cannot carry out, and offer prayers which he daily belies. Beginning from about 1860 for a series of years, the young men of the Brahmo Somaj, in a mutual improvement society called the "Sungut," paid the utmost and minutest attention to the purification of their private conduct and character. They felt and professed the utmost abhorrence for sin, and set about in right earnest to destroy the roots of carnality in their hearts. And they were so earnest and strict in this that they came to be considered in the light of Puritans who would do away even with the innocent pleasures of life. This band of earnest, pure-minded men gave the impetus to social reforms in the Brahmo Somaj. Because how is personal purity possible in the midst of effete and corrupt social customs and institutions,

all based upon low and mistaken notions of religion? Personal reform necessitated social reform. The Brahmo Somaj, in enforcing, therefore, the principles of true righteousness upon its followers, has had to undertake great schemes of social reform, which have been as necessary as they are successful. The Indian Reform Association, which has done so much in social matters to improve the Brahmo Somaj of India, was founded in the year 1871. The Bharat Asram, in which a large number of Brahmo families dwelt together for social and religious improvement, was established in 1872. But all these reforms culminated in the new legislative enactment passed at the instance of the Brahmo Somaj by the Government of India, entitled the Native Marriage Act. This has at one stroke paved the way to many reforms that, under ordinary circumstances, would perhaps take centuries to accomplish.*

* This law is known in India as Act III of 1872. It does away with idolatrous rites in marriages, which is a great blow to orthodox Hinduism. It legalizes marriages between different castes, and thereby undermines that institution. It sanctions the re-marriage of Hindu widows. It makes early marriages impossible by fixing the minimum limit of age. It introduces for the first

Thus the position of the Brahmo Somaj before the world is not merely that of an institution for the religious enlightenment, but also the social reform and moral elevation of the millions of India. This position of threefold importance which the Somaj possesses is entirely due to the spirit of progress which the institution possesses.

Not long ago one of the most prominent thinkers of Europe made the remark that no religion in the world can make real progress or prolong its vitality unless there is embodied in it the true missionary spirit. The missionary life of a church means the overflow of its faith and love naturally resulting in a desire to scatter its blessings upon mankind. And what is faith, love, or charity, if it does not continually multiply and pour itself into the heart of the world? If within the hearts of the leaders of the Brahmo Somaj there had not been the inspiration of truth, holiness, and the love of well doing, what progress could there have been in that

time the modern institution of civil marriage into Hindu society; and besides these, it confers other indirect advantages. These indicate the line of reforms in which the Brahmo Somaj has been generally engaged.

church, great and almost insuperable as its difficulties have been? But they felt they had a great trust to discharge, a mighty and blessed message to deliver to their people. It was found by spiritual, as well as practical experience, that the ideas, feelings, and principles of the Somaj must spread, or cease to be. Some members of the body felt drawn to become missionaries. They could not have made a better resolution. The time was ripe for it, the nation was ready for it, the church of God wanted it. The Mission Department of the Brahmo Somaj was first organized in 1865, and culminated in the Missionary Expedition of 1879. During these seventeen years our missionaries, at first few in number, without means or influence, travelled far and wide in different parts of their great country and elsewhere. The enthusiasm of their nature, which was the effect of their intense conviction and deep devotional feelings, gave to their utterances a power and a charm that went into the hearts of their hearers, and produced a response equally effective. They knew how to appeal to the warm

impulsive Aryan heart. So successful have these appeals been, that wherever our missionaries have gone they have been welcomed with open arms. India is a continent by itself, inhabited by races of men with different ideas and institutions, speaking different languages, and not always cherishing the most friendly feelings towards each other. But it is a remarkable fact that unfamiliar and unfriendly as Indian races may be to each other, they have been always so enthusiastic in receiving the humble missionaries of the Somaj that almost wherever the latter have gone they have established congregations of worshippers, till there are at present about one hundred and fifty Brahmo Somajes scattered all over the country, sometimes thousands of miles apart.*

This, however, is not all. The latest development of the Brahmo Somaj is its spiritual

* The north-western limit of the Somaj is Rawulpindi near Peshawur; the northern limit is Dehra Doon at the foot of the Himalayas; the southern limit is Madras; the western limit is Bombay and Mangalore on the coast of the Arabian Sea; and the eastern limit is Assam. These boundaries cover almost the entire area of the country.

position as the New Dispensation. It harmonizes all religions, all processes of spiritual culture, all prophets and saints, and all profound philosophies under the spirit of Theism. The New Dispensation views the Brahmo Somaj in relation to its development as the spiritual purpose of God for the salvation of the world. As we wish to devote a separate part of our book to this subject, we shall say no more here.

The development of the Brahmo Somaj during the last fifty-two years is thus a wonderful study. Its chief claim as a divine dispensation lies in its growth from what it was into what it at present is. At first it was established only as a Vedantic institution to revive the ancient monotheism of the land. With a house of worship, and regular principles of organization, it then grew into a Church. A congregation and membership were next evolved with a covenant and public declaration of faith. The next work to which the Brahmo Somaj addressed itself was the formation of a definite and rational creed. But how can people follow fixed principles of faith without

changing their personal and social lives? And hence during the succeeding ten years the Brahmo Somaj was occupied in ascending to a higher platform of private morals and public reforms. Brahmo marriages and intermarriages began from the year 1861. This stage of progress led to the well-known rupture between the older and younger party of Brahmos, and the establishment of the B. S. of India in 1866. Then commenced the great spiritual exercises and emotional excitement in the institution, and the first devotional festival was celebrated in November 1867. Side by side with the spiritual excitement the most radical social reforms were commenced, and the Native Marriage Act was passed, the Indian Reform Association was established in 1870, and the Bharat Asram in 1872. Brahmo Somajes began to be established in different parts of the country as a result of this new agency. A most active missionary organization was constituted, and the preachers began to travel from one part of the country to the other; all this culminated in the missionary expedi-

tion of 1879. The whole movement under the influence of such manifold activities began to take a new shape. New doctrines began to be conceived and preached. Yoga, Bhakti, and Asceticism began to be explained from a new standpoint. Great reverence began to be felt for Christ and other Masters; Pilgrimages to saints and prophets began; Sacraments and ceremonies were instituted; and at last the New Dispensation, as the highest development of the Brahmo Somaj, was proclaimed in 1880. To point out the principles of all these developments in their progressive order, and trace them down to the present moment, is a task of no small difficulty. But without some attempt of that kind the position of the Brahmo Somaj cannot be completely or even adequately understood. Ours is only a modest effort in that direction.

Essential Religion of the Brahmo Somaj.

THERE is a deep and lingering sadness in the mind when we contemplate how men have made things easy and important most difficult. In our usual worldly life this is painful enough, but it becomes much more painful when we find it repeated in our religious life. Religion has been made the most difficult of all things, though nothing in the world is simpler. Our object just now will be to elucidate some of its simplest principles. The first of these is Faith in God. Faith in God! These words call into our remembrance how many conflicts—how much ignorance and superstition—how much bitterness and disagreement! The words call into remembrance how much life, and light, and love! What power, what sweetness of joy! Strange recollections and feelings, the most opposite and diverse, are called up into the mind by that simple phrase, Faith in God. The old religious world would still hold by its orthodoxy and Pharisa-

ism, and what is worse, would ascribe to God the Pharisaism which belongs to itself. The God of that world would not accept the worship of the uncircumcised, would not accept the sacrifice of love and trust which is not consecrated by authorized ceremonies, forms, and phrases. The God of that world would exclude more than half the human race—would consecrate ignorance, darkness, and the domination of the few over the many. Yes, he would stand up against the spirit of the age, and hurl anathemas upon the divine utterances of Nature and Knowledge. He is only to be found in the sanctuary or nowhere. The universe is not his abode; he is too small for it. He is only to be found in the Sacred Book, or nowhere. The soul and the universe cannot teach about him. The Moslem sage went and rebuked Nanak, who lay with his feet towards the Musjid, saying: "Base Infidel! what! wouldst thou dishonour the House of God?" The misfortune is that many of us are not so strong in faith, or so powerful in mind as Nanak was, and cannot return that glorious retort that came

readily to his lips—"Then turn my feet to the place which is not the House of God!" We silently, meekly, weakly accept the Pharisaism which is placed before us, bend before it, or rebel against it, and in rebelling against it rebel against our God and our own soul. Nanak saw God in his sanctuary. He saw God sitting on the throne of the whole universe, with the sun and moon for his altar lights, with the canopy of the stars over his head. But we? We would follow our priest into the narrow precincts of our temple, into our creeds, shibboleths, authorized superannuated inanities, and there or nowhere shall we behold God! No one respects Pharisaism and orthodoxy more than ourselves. There is a strictness, a method, a discipline, an intellectual and moral education in it, without which religion is often but the moonshine of liberalism. There is a fidelity, a loyalty, a self-suppression in it which we admire and court, but there is also in it much we cannot and dare not accept. We dare not accept that unnatural bondage of the intellect, conscience, and soul which a theocracy would impose. The

greatest mischief which this has produced has been to render servile the minds of those that rebelled against it. If one was a follower of the old religion, and if one conformed to all its dictates, it would not matter; but the misfortune is that when one rebels against it, then is he most enslaved. The exclusive theology of the world would not recognize God in the world of his laws, and in the world of human nature; therefore a scientific man, whose mind is unprejudiced and liberal, seems forced to reject the entire notion of a God. Because there is the one extreme of superstition and sectarianism, therefore he must go to the other extreme of scepticism and unbelief. Yes, this has been the greatest misfortune of the world. This unbelief is, to our thinking, the direct effect of the slavery which a narrow theology imposes, the effect of a necessary reaction, a servile sedition.

Let us take the position of honest enquirers and see what there is in this principle of faith. The true man of thought, when he contemplates the world, traces and simplifies its laws—ascends

from fact to fact, and sees that outside, below, and beyond the domain of sense there is a mysterious Something which Science cannot solve and Reason cannot explain—the great unsolved problem of being which has hung over creation since the day of its birth. And then within the inner world, where the laws of the mind are acting, the man of science beholds certain wants, cravings, instincts, senses of absolute dependence, a pervading outstretch of the infinite, which Reason cannot resolve, which Philosophy cannot remove. This is the conclusion recognised by the most advanced scientific men of all times. This is a faithful admission. This is the great truth, which has to be owned by science, and placed before the religious world. The scientific man has done what he could do. He has discovered all that he could ; at least he has defined the region of his discoveries. He has solved and explained all within his own sphere, and the problems which he cannot solve he places before you honestly and faithfully. Now it is for the religious man to come forward, and, in the name

of God, to try, if he is able, to solve the mystery which science recognises, but cannot explain. Here, to our mind, begins the world of true religion. If any theology is able, let it come forward and establish its position here. If it is not able, let it retire to its own place in the arena of human speculation. Let the solitary soul, seeking God and Truth, winged with inspiration, look up towards heaven and answer the great question that the universe asks.

Yes, this is a mystery, in the darkness of which the world has sat and worshipped for many centuries. It is the unknown God about whom St. Paul spoke to the Athenians. The Unknown was once, has often been made known, but the world outgrows, even when it does not forget, its own knowledge again and again, therefore the mystery can never end. This mystery kindles, but transcends all knowledge. It is this which has inspired the profoundest worship and the grandest faith—the noble self-sacrifice which makes up the true heroism of the world. The moral law in man is a strange mystery. Why does man continually try to transcend his

own self? Reason in its upward flight to the Infinite in all things is a mystery. Why are we compelled to search the unsearchable? Why do we try to utter the unutterable? Why should great, impersonal, self-immolating love constrain our admiration, and draw out all that is deepest and most beautiful in our self-bound contentious nature? Strange how men wrestle with their own unbelief. The most sceptical among us continually struggle to rise to some sort of faith. Man labours to rise beyond this world of shadows, fights Phantoms with scornful scepticism, and aspires to rest on the Reality. Every school of thought establishes the truth that the visible is but the form, the invisible is the Real. Religion deals with this mystery. Yet does the mystery always remain a mystery? Is there no light in God's heaven that dispels this darkness of the soul? There is. Let us look at the mystery in the face. What is it? Why to our mind, and we proceed upon the admission of the scientific man, this mystery is the mystery of Life. Over the face of all things, in heaven and earth,

and the soul of man, there is a lurking indwelling Life which one is awe-struck to behold, and which one cannot explain. Our profound spiritual forefathers beheld this mystery of Life, and bent before it, and adored it. They called this mystery the Life of Life—the Life of the Creation—the Spirit which enters into everything, but is different from all, which gives brightness amidst darkness—life in death—design in disorder, and harmony in discord. Go down bravely into the depths of this mystery and you shall find a Life in it, a vivifying something, a secret Soul. It is nothing more than that pervading, throbbing, glorious Life which makes the universe what it is—a grand, growing, living thing. It is the Spirit, the Soul, that makes us feel we are spirits and souls, and within which we live and rest. It is the ocean, upon which the whole universe floats away. It is the Presence of God. The consciousness of it is God-consciousness. One step below the sense is the great realm of the Spirit. If men will not try to see the Unseen with the eye of sense, but behold the Spirit with the spirit that is in every one, they will

arrive at God-vision, sense can suggest, but cannot solve the mystery. The spirit discerns its kindred. The soul beholds the soul.

This great mystery, then, is a great Life, a great Presence, which the soul recognises, reverences and calls the supreme Soul, the supreme Spirit, nay God! This is the work of spontaneous faith. The prophet craves to hold it more and more, because to him it is a Life which illumines all the mysteries of the world. It is a Spirit, a Personality, that can satisfy the deep insatiable wants of one's own profoundest spirit and personality. Every man instinctively and inevitably *depends* upon it. For life and for death everybody *looks up* to it. The soul clings to, appeals to, and is appealed to by its kindred relations, and in matter beholds a Spirit, and in spirit a Life, Presence, and Personality that answers its questionings, responds to its prayers, and bids it rest, and doubt not. This is the uncomprehended Infinite which attracts and baffles the intellect. The great spiritual poet finds this Life, this Infinite symbolised and embodied in his heart, in all that is beautiful,

suggestive, lovely, endless, and sublime in the world. It furnishes him with the grandest and the most profound inspiration of poetry of which his soul is capable—a poetry which illumines philosophy, and gives wings to faith. The power of this Life surrounds the mind with that awe and utter sense of dependence, under which the fatalist crouches down trembling with fear. This is the all-dispensing and superintending Power. It is this Life, which is at the bottom of all things—of all the beauty, and of all harmony with which the world is full. This is the presence of God. To the philosopher it is a great mysterious Mind; to the poet it is a great mysterious Beauty and Love; to the superstitious and the fatalist it is a great mysterious all-crushing Power; to the humble man of faith it is the refreshing fulness and presence of the Spirit of God. But it is perceived by all. Yes, we should not conceal from ourselves the fact that, had we but the right mind, we would *perceive* God—we would have the perception of His spirit within our spirit. What is faith in God if it is not a direct perception? We

may honour the indirect and the second-hand belief in God which is prevalent amongst most men, but belief in God is never perfect unless it is realised as an act of perception. What is it that produces within my mind an impression of a deeper, higher, and more glorious wisdom than that which I myself possess? How is it that the fact of a strange wisdom and knowledge enters into my being, if it is nowhere? Can the darkness of ignorance create wisdom out of its own depth? Can that wisdom which the mind beholds exist without a Mind which contains it? Is there not a wonderful Beauty outside me, which I cannot but perceive? How is it that this strange beauty comes and makes its impression within my soul, when I myself possess it not, and that this Goodness which I am awe-struck to behold, lightens all around me? Where does it all come from? What is beauty without the Beautiful, and goodness without the Good? Perception is but the inward recognition of impressions which outward objects make upon our minds. It is from the impressions that we conclude the existence

of the outward objects which produce them. And exactly the same argument holds good in relation to faith in God. If I am faithful enough to find that a mighty encircling wisdom strikes up within me a divine fire of knowledge and insight that was not in my soul before —and a beauty and a tranquillity in which creation is steeped, a love which enlivens everything, a power which commands the universe, and makes me depend upon it absolutely, an ever-present Infinite the sense of which I cannot shake off, a moral Voice which commands me, and often forces me, to act in spite of myself—(if all this happens), I immediately conclude that there is within me and around me a Spirit which has touched me! Not to believe in the Infinite is as impossible as not to believe that the world exists. Faith in the Infinite is a perception, the strongest of all perceptions. Only it is not the perception of the outward, but of the inward eye. To God then belong the wisdom, the life, the beauty, the harmony, the love, light, power, the commanding purity, the besetting infinity that stand out before us within and

without. Everyone—at one time or at another—doth behold the Spirit of the Infinite. Yes, He doth pass the door of my house, but I know Him not. He comes and goes within and without the soul, but the soul says it hath not seen Him, and cries and cries again: "Lord reveal Thyself." He doth reveal Himself, He hath revealed Himself, will always reveal Himself to those men and women who really seek Him, and for them faith grows perfect into the surest and profoundest knowledge.

When the spirit of God is thus recognised in the soul as infinite Life and Truth, the soul cannot but assume a peculiar attitude, standing face to face before such Presence. How can we stand before wisdom, power, love, sublimity, and purity like His? How can we stand before His spirit, listless and unabashed, without reverence and without life? Ah! when the spirit of God is recognised, the soul stands transformed before Him; the breath of His presence and power calls into bloom all its powers of love and trust, all its aspirations after purity and salvation, and the pious soul bends before its Lord as the tree

bends under the load of its own fruits. This is the attitude of true spiritual worship. It is too painful to notice how worship, with men, often means only forms and empty words. We cannot dispense with forms and words, but what are they without the natural and powerful feelings which the Father's presence evokes in the soul? Alas, these vain ceremonies and forms have, on the one hand, driven men to utter prayerlessness; and, on the other, degraded them into offering selfish appeals for material benefit. There is only one prayer which we know, which we preach and practise, the infinite repetition of which fills the hearts of all good men, "Lord, pour into my heart Thy spirit!" That is the one prayer which man can make, infinitely, endlessly, ever growing upon the soul; still the same great unsatisfied craving, longing the more the more it is answered, always seeking, asking, hungering, thirsting, praying here and hereafter, and receiving through all eternity. When the wisdom of God is seen, and the ignorance of the soul is owned; when the mercy and love and good-

ness of God are beheld, and the dryness of the soul is felt; when the power and the purity of the Lord are understood, and the true humility of man's heart presents itself in all its nakedness —no other prayer arises except this prayer: "Lord pour Thy spirit within me." What wealth can be greater than the possession of the spirit of God? What happiness is more precious than the happiness—the unspeakable blissfulness—which proceeds from a consciousness of God's love. Aye, and what treasure can we covet more than that treasure of righteousness, the purity of will which exists in him in fulness? If you are afflicted in the world, go and tell Him your afflictions. We have nothing to say to it; but remember, that what you call affliction may be happiness disguised. In this world the arrangements of life are so strange that good is often thought to be evil, and evil good. That which ought to make us anxious and sorrowful fills us with joy, and when we ought to laugh and rejoice we sit weeping and brooding in melancholy. Do not therefore stand before the Throne of God and ask deliverance

from that which you do not understand, lest in praying for fancied prosperity, you pray for real evil and misery, but ask from Him that of which you are sure, that which your soul ought to prize above all things—ask from the Lord the wealth of His spirit. Let the physical world act according to physical laws. Let rain and sunshine, riches and poverty, health and disease, life and death, come and go according to the laws that regulate them. Keep those laws and break them not. Investigate them, ascertain them by all means, and as far as you can, increase the happiness of the world. But when you pray to God, pray for nothing except for His love, and the sweetness of communion, of salvation, and the spirit of holiness. Prayer is the way to get them. Ask the Lord for what He alone can give. Ask when you are bent down by the weight of your faith and love; ask in the light and mystery of His presence; ask Him in this attitude, in the silent language of the soul, or in the impassioned words that spontaneously come to the tongue, in the tears and throbs of the spirit, which the Lord can

count, but no human being can—yea, that only is the attitude of worship—that only is the language of prayer. It is a sad thing to find out how often we are all satisfied merely with the husk of worship, throwing out of sight altogether the real bread and life for which the soul is dying. Men and women! be not deceived by mere glaring glittering toys of words and forms wherein the wealth of the spirit is not to be found. It is Love that is worth having. Behold the Love of God, who stands face to face within the depths of the faith of your spirit. It is Wisdom that is worth having. Behold the infinite ocean of the Wisdom of God, who sits enthroned on the awful splendour of all the worlds. It is purity, righteousness, tranquillity, that is worth having. These exist in their fulness in His spirit. Therefore in the presence of Him, let us bend down in the attitude which best befits the soul, and let us ask from Him, the overflowing fruitfulness of that piety, which is love and wisdom, and righteousness and peace that passeth understanding!

And when there is faith in Him, and when

there is true worship, there must be true life also. True life is nothing more than a conformity to moral law. And true morality is nothing more than self-sacrifice. Self-sacrifice is the only religion in life. The word sacrifice is much more often misunderstood than any other word in the dictionary. Sacrifice often merely means self-abnegation, suffering, and death. To our mind this meaning is one-sided. Sacrifice means true life consecrated to the service of God. Sacrifice means, on the one hand, an all-powerful passion of the spirit, and it means, on the other hand, that labour, that unceasing, disinterested work which the faithful servant of God renders unto Him and unto the world. And this work requires suffering, pain, and death, to bear all for its sake. It is known by its devotedness and its intensity; and what is our love to God if it is not an intense, devoted love—if it is not a passion, if it is not a flame of enthusiasm which consumes all other passions in the depths of the soul? That half-hearted, sentimental, unreal devotion which men commonly call piety is a miserable

thing. How can I be free from the carnal passions of my own nature unless there is a more powerful passion to hold them down, and to turn them from evil unto good? It is a passion only that can check another passion; and if the foul desires and wrong feelings of our nature are to be checked, they can only be checked by that powerful intense enthusiasm of love with which God's servant ever looks to Him. After all in the domain of true religion there is not that distinction between affection and morality which men generally lay down. When morality is not passionate it ceases to have motive, and fails to create motive. True morality is in motive and not in act. When there is this passion of piety, it cannot fail to manifest itself in the real acts and conduct of life. What is that love which would not serve? What is that passion which would not bear evidence to itself in life? In the heart of the religious man conscience and the emotions unite to form the indivisible integrity of the soul. So, therefore, the true lover of God devotes his existence to labour, and to service, and to those deeds which are

acceptable before Him. It is often found that in loving God, and in trying to serve Him, we are avoided by men, and even persecuted. Those whom we are trying to serve often rise up against us, and cruelly stab us in the heart. This is suffering which often marks the life of most religious men. Ah ! it is very great suffering indeed. When my love is frustrated and trampled upon, I feel an agony which finds its parallel nowhere. The persecution of which we speak may take the form of physical outrage, or moral cruelty. And thus the idea of suffering enters into that of true sacrifice. But then if there is agony in this service of love, is there not also a reward beyond all comparison ? What reward do you want for your love which you give unto God, except that you love Him, and He accepts your love ? If we offer ourselves—if we suffer—that suffering is transformed into joy, is turned into heavenliness, when God's love touches it, and it proceeds from our own love. There is a glory in the suffering of the good man which the world often deifies. There is an internal glory in the suffering of the faithful

servant of God which more than recompenses the amount of its pain. The price of life is a very heavy price to pay, to us who love our lives so much, the price of life finds its equivalent nowhere; but what is there in the giving away of life, when there is a deeper, more joyful, and beautiful life to be found? Let those men and women who do not know that life weep, if they will, but let them weep for themselves, and not for him who prepareth to go to his Father's mansions of everlasting blessedness. To the man of service and faith, death, terrible as it is, is a gain, because it is an earnest of that final triumph with which love must in the end be crowned even on earth. True sacrifice, then, is God-loving, man-serving, self-forgetting enthusiasm; true piety, endless uncalculating self-surrender to God, and to his work. How can we serve him? How can we frail mortal beings serve the perfect One, the God of infinite wisdom and power? That service which we want to give unto Him is to be given to His world. He does not on His own account want our service, but when we

can serve His children, when we simply and absolutely work for their good, He counts that as the best service to Himself. True service, therefore, is devotion to the good of the world. And thus the pious man gives his life as sacrifice of service for the good of the world because of the depth of the love which he feels for God.

Thus, true service, true prayer, and true faith, these three form all essential principles of religion. These are the three principles taught by the Brahmo Somaj. No theology have we got, all our theology is our earnest, intense faith in the presence of the spirit of God within us. No ceremonial, no ritual have we got, except the grand formless ritual of love and of worship, which the soul spontaneously offers before the Throne of Infinite Love and Wisdom; no other sacrifice, no other atonement do we recognise, except that sacrifice which proceeds from the intense enthusiasm of piety in the soul, giving evidence of its power and truth in unchangeable devotedness of life. What name is

capacious enough for these principles? Has God any name? No, we call Him God, because we know no other word. What word would measure the depth, the height, and the breadth of that Spirit, who includes in Himself all that is good, beautiful, and true; who is in everything we know, who is more than anything we can conceive of, or can express? What name shall fully express and embody that grand and glorious worship of love, which humanity in all its forms and stages has ever offered to its Father, always until now? What name would measure that sacred offering of self-sacrifice, that service and labour, that fidelity and trust, that sorrow and agony through which God's servants have tried to do their duty to Him and by the world? There is one great nameless Brotherhood overspreading the whole world, of which we claim to be members, of which we call upon all men to be members. We know no other creed than that there is only one Father, here, and now. We recognise Him in every sanctuary, in every temple, in every

philosophy, in every science, in every faith, in every nation, and in every soul. We bow down honouring every sacrifice that is offered to Him by men who are in the midst of error, or by those who are partially free from error. All over the world there is ignorance and darkness; all over the world there is faith and love. He that loves darkness is enslaved by it in the midst of light, and would not see the sun that hides its face behind a transient cloud; he that loves light and truth beholds sunlight behind the darkness that for a moment seems to sit upon the face of the earth. Light always triumphs over darkness. He that has no love in him, despairs before the bitterness and evil that has raged, and still rages, around us; but he that hath true life in his soul beholds humanity and truth united in one bond of love with the Father, who is infinite love. Let ours be that nameless and formless Faith, that which is the perception of the continued Presence of the One True God; ours be that Worship without language and without ritual, which is more real and more

beautiful than any other sentiment of which human nature is capable, and let ours be the Sacrifice of daily labour, and never-ending service in the cause of humanity, which is the cause of God. And God's Spirit which watches in silence, and in the solitude of every heart, and God's Truth and God's Love, that encircles and embraces the entire universe, be with us all. May He make the future more glorious than the past, and, in the present, give the earnest of the future. Let our religion be simple, our faith be simple, our worship be simple, and our service be simple, and then our prayer to God and our sacrifice for universal brotherhood shall be accepted in heaven.

The Religion of the Brahmo Somaj Discussed.

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Popular Impressions and Ideas.

THOSE who are outside the circle of immediate sympathy with the Brahmo Somaj do not perhaps care to take sufficient pains to understand and examine the principles of its religion. It is generally interesting to them, as a protest against idolatry; and they view it, on the whole, as an encouraging sign of the times which may one day develop into "something better." There are others whose interest in the institution is keener, though far less favorable. They view it from the stand point of religious rivalry, and the severely critical mood which that position so naturally induces. They unhesitatingly set it down as a perfect failure, as a speculative, social, and religious experiment, which has been tried and found totally wanting. A few there may be, on the other hand, among the general public, who view the Brahmo Somaj with greater sympathy, and are inclined to think that it contains some promise for the

future. For the information of persons of the last mentioned class, and of others whose interest, of whatever kind, in the movement may tempt them to express opinions and pass judgments, which, if worth forming at all, ought to be formed on some foundation of fact, it will be of service if an attempt is made—albeit in the nature of the case the attempt must be inadequate—to explain as briefly as possible some of the principles on which the Brahmo Somaj bases its religion. To the great disadvantage of Brahmos, it must be here observed that these principles have never yet been sufficiently set forth and elaborated in their writings. This perhaps gives some semblance of excuse to a number of the opponents of their body to misunderstand, in spite of repeated explanations, the most elementary things of the Brahmo's creed, and, what is much worse, to represent them incorrectly. One example will suffice. More than ten years ago the Somaj sought to place before the public, in sufficiently strong light, the universally recognized fact that religion, in its essential reality, is intuitive and natural

to the human mind. Religion is an irrepressible instinct of human nature, which necessarily finds its embodiment in formal beliefs and principles, in ceremonial rules and observances, in external evidences and authorities, which, however outwardly divergent and erroneous, agree, when carefully analysed, in their original essence. This instinct involves certain necessary relations between the percipient mind of man and the divine realities that surround him within and without. The relations take shape among mankind in those elementary ideas about God, immortality, and human duty, which are everywhere found. The very ground-work of religion is possible on certain primary and germinal convictions, more or less fully developed—nay, sometimes *very* undeveloped indeed—to which all religious teachings, to be effective, must make their final appeal. Thus all religion to guard itself in these days against the dogmatic denials, and plausible sophistries of prevalent scientific scepticism, against the conflicts and discrepancies of critical and historical evidence, has ultimately to establish itself on the supreme

necessities of the human spirit. So far as its relations with mankind in general are concerned, apart from its exclusive authorities and testimonies, every religion must, in some measure, hold the ground common to all men—the ground of fundamental instinct and conviction which remains unshaken, even when external evidence and authority are found to fail. Now to what does Christianity address its truths in the case of those men or races who, for moral and intellectual disadvantages, are unable to feel the force, and appreciate the value of its historical testimonies? Have we not heard of remarkable conversions in which men, after long years of scepticism, infidelity, and hard unrighteousness, have suddenly found within them strange instincts and cravings awakened, the irresistible force and intensity of which led them to run headlong into any faith that first presented itself? What, in short, is the meaning of the internal evidence of religion, if there is not a secret but real fitness between the truths it teaches, and the spontaneous spiritual perceptions of man? The religion of the Brahmo

Somaj is founded on these. The process by which the members of that institution have come to attach so much importance to the inward rather than to the outward testimonies of religion will be explained as we proceed further. It is enough to indicate at this place the nature of the ground on which they found their faith. To urge that the spiritual potencies of the soul are not in uniform activity throughout the world is no more valid objection than what can be urged with equal reason against the development of intellect, conscience, and the affections in man. They all require the help of external agencies to call them forth, the teachings of experience, the influences of education, circumstance, and surrounding belief. This is evidently a truism. Nevertheless the truism has been repeated times without number by the Brahmo Somaj to denote its real position, and to acknowledge its obligations to other systems of faith. But to no purpose. A class of opponents in this country have always declared themselves against this simple doctrine of first principles. If the objectors had proceeded from the extreme

school of secularism and material scepticism, we could have understood what they said. But coming as they do from the body of orthodox Trinitarian Christian Missionaries, we often fail to understand their attitude. Do they deny the primary religious instincts of man, and hold his nature to be as fundamentally devoid of all ideas about God, morality, and immortality, as that of the oyster or ape? Is his spirituality nothing more than a parrot-lesson poured into his brain, a mere molecular change in the nervous centres, a hereditary weakness transmitted and registered in consciousness? This statement made by religious men, however disappointing to some, will be readily sanctioned by a class of influential thinkers who, tracing the origin of man to apes and oysters, find his religious instincts rather awkward obstacles in the way of satisfactory scientific conclusions. If, on the other hand, the critics admit the existence of any fundamental ideas about heavenly realities in the nature of man—ideas which find their correlation and development in the facts and laws of outward nature—our only

request to them is to define what these ideas are; and point out where, and in what particulars, they differ from the similar truths in which the Brahmos have the misfortune to believe. The retort which this question will readily provoke we can very well anticipate. It will be said that the Brahmo Somaj evolves its whole theology out of the depths of its Intuitional Consciousness. That the dogmas, theories, systems, services, reforms, dispensations, &c., in which that institution abounds, have all started into being as a host of Intuitions reared in some hidden region of the Brahmo type of human nature, ready-armed, and rough-shod to take by storm the whole religious world. This curious indictment, which must have been originally framed with the praiseworthy object of winning "an easy victory" over Brahmo disputants, is regarded by the Somaj with some wonder, not unmixed, perhaps, with feelings of amusement. When did the Brahmos teach that their whole theology was intuitional? The germs only, and the germs not merely of the religion of the Brahmo Somaj, but of Christianity, Hinduism, and

Mahomedanism alike, are intuitions; the peculiarity of the Brahmos being that they build their faith thereon without the supernatural and historical ground-work which belongs distinctively to each of the rest. That faith in its development is certainly open to criticism and liable to variation, but any criticism of the fundamental principles underlying them applies not to the religion of the Brahmos only, but to the elementary truths of all religions. And we should like to know what religion will like to submit to the charge of being against the nature and instincts of mankind? As to one Mr. Dyson's celebrated "Brahmic Intuitions," we are loth to say anything. He is only typical of a host of other critics, who would demolish the Brahmo Somaj by the violence of their penmanship. His powerful intellect has created these "Intuitions" that, cobra-like, it may devour its own progeny. We give him due credit for this achievement. His "Intuitions" are very good in all other respects, and lack only in one minor merit, namely they were never owned by the Brahmo Somaj. They are entirely his own

offspring. We know this Mr. Dyson has been at immense philosophical labour to conceive and produce his "Intuitions," and he has baptized them with a Brahmo patronymic. He has made his reputation by giving them birth. That is enough reason why he should be fond of them, expect them to win theological battles for him, and refuse to part with them, though their pretensions to genuineness have been so often called to question. All this we say is quite natural, but is that any reason why their paternity should be fastened upon the Brahmo Somaj? If Mr. Dyson's friends are disposed to think that his "Brahmic Intuitions" give him an easy victory over the Brahmos, let him by all means enjoy it, and enjoy it the more as the victory does not seem to have alarmed or done much harm to the party over whom it has been won. After this, we are aware, it will be too much to hope that misrepresentations of theistic doctrines will cease in this country; but in fairness, let it at least be borne in mind that the Brahmo Somaj cannot, in every instance, undertake to be

responsible for what everybody, who has "an easy victory" to win, may palm off upon the public as the intuitions and dogmas of that institution.

Relations to the Scriptures and Creeds of the World.

The above, it is expected, will serve the double purpose of giving some idea of the basis of the religion of the Brahmo Somaj, and at the same time of exposing a too carelessly-accepted popular misrepresentation. But it must not be supposed for one moment that because the Brahmos fix the roots of all religious belief in the depths of human instinct, where no reckless scepticism, or materialistic sophistry, can reach it, they on that account lack in reverence for the records of sacred truth in the world. Our readers ought to remember that when the Brahmo Somaj was founded in 1830, its religion was that mixed form of monotheism which is inculcated in the *Vedanta*. It was considerably later that the authority of the *Vedas*, recognized as infallible nearly for twenty-two years, was given up in favor of a more rational creed. The history of this important change is easily told. The lead-

ers of the Brahmo Somaj at that time being men whose education was less completely national than that of the founder, became every day more and more conscious of the open disagreement between the principles of Vedic orthodoxy, and their own ideas of essential religion and morality, as well as the conclusions of modern science. The processes now so generally resorted to by the orthodox of harmonizing irreconcilable positions by blandly ignoring the actual difficulty and a quiet reference to the intervention of the Evil One, or by heroic, though somewhat hopeless, conflicts with the inexorable philosophy of the age, had not been known quite so fully then. Finding therefore "the ethics of subscription" an insoluble problem, they candidly confessed they could not keep their original position, and declared their renunciation of the authority of the Hindu scriptures about the year 1852. In discarding the ancient revelation of their forefathers, however, the Brahmo Somaj did not mean that the Hindu scriptures ceased to be to them a principal source of spiritual benefit and guid-

ance. They published a selection of passages from the sacred writings of the country, just as their founder had published a similar selection from the New Testament; and from this time forward Hindu, Christian, and all other scriptures were viewed by them in the same light, in the light of a grand depository of truth attained by the religious consciousness of all nations under varying modes and orders of development. Exceedingly valuable, inspiring, nay, indispensable when rightly understood, the interpretation of these truths ought not to be entrusted to the hands of a misleading tradition, a narrow-minded priesthood, or a blind unenlightened faith, but to the light of God in Nature as explained by science, and in human reason, conscience, and soul, as explained by sound observation, by progressive spirituality, and the genuine goodness of life. The exact position of their own theology was perhaps not adequately realised by those who were so early able by their conscientious protests to set aside a doctrinal unsoundness, which nearly for a period of two decades fettered the intellectual and moral progress of the Brahmo

Somaj. But the removal of scriptural infallibility involved a recognition of the supremacy which, in the conflict or absence of opinion and authority, must belong to the ultimate laws of truth, graven on the tablets of man's nature. Historically, then, the doctrine of first principles thus became an article of belief in the Brahmo Somaj.

If then the Brahmo Somaj do not feel ashamed to acknowledge the general truthfulness of all religious scriptures, while repudiating the absolute infallibility of any, it is not to be wondered at if they likewise recognize a very large amount of truth in the prominent doctrines of the most prevalent systems of faith in the world. Believing in the universal and impartial action of the Spirit of truth in all conditions of humanity, whenever the soul of man is uplifted in search of the light of God's face, the Brahmos can discover all over the world the impress of divinity upon great prophets, doctrines and theologies which the degrading superstitions of men and their selfish subtleties have, to the majority of us, made

unintelligible or absurd. And the recognition of truth in such cases means its adoption, It has long been customary to examine in a perfunctory manner all foreign systems of faith and outlandish teachers for the object of criticism only, and when any unexpected truth is found therein, to pass it off as a second-hand edition of a doctrine or two contained in the creed of the sect to which the critic himself belongs. This high-handed method of dealing with the claims of rival religions precludes, in the first place, the possibility of discovering any important truth that lies below the merest surface of things by shutting out all the deeper powers of spiritual perception; and in the next place, it causes the disappearance of the whole originality and freshness of truth, even when accidentally discovered, by presenting it through the colored medium of sectarian prejudice. If we are to learn from the past we must learn not only from the sacred records preserved by faith and tradition, but at least equally as much from the great doctrines and ideas which have more than anything else shaped the destinies of man-

kind. Unconsciously, therefore, and instinctively led by their religious needs and aspirations, the Brahmos have adopted many of the doctrines of the ruling religions of the world, and done homage to their great men with such slight modifications as are naturally suggested by the peculiarity of their circumstances. It has been the ambition and the striving of eminent Brahmos to find in their church the representation of the leading ideas that govern the religious world, and removing the discord and disorganization that usually characterize them, to preserve their variety; but give them such harmony and oneness as belongs to all God's truths. This has often exposed the Brahmos to the charge of plagiarism. They are said to appropriate other men's faith without due acknowledgment, and teach the doctrines of those systems to which they are supposed to stand in the relation of hostility. The hostility spoken of is at least not on the side of the Brahmo Somaj, or they would not so readily acknowledge their obligations to their antagonists. Only they do not

see how the copyright of any really God-given truth can be secured to a mere sect, however important that sect may be. A truth, whether in science or in religion, as soon as it is revealed and recognized, becomes the property of mankind, and it is as foolish to think of denying to extend its benefit to outsiders, as of declining to accept it, because the men, who view it from various standpoints, quarrel over their petty differences of creed. Here lies to our apprehension the very soul of sectarianism. The fatal exclusiveness that imports into the sacred domain of religion the shop-keeping rivalry of contending markets, has proved to be the ruin of human brotherhood. To avoid that evil as much as possible the religion of the Brahmo Somaj embraces the spirit of Hinduism as well as of Christianity, without identifying itself with the hundred little sects that wage endless war with each other. There is, or ought to be, no trade mark on what is really true and good in men's faith, life, and teaching, because it belongs not to one people, country, or time, but to all. It is the wealth of humanity as

a whole. One other source of light to which the Brahmos attach supreme importance must be here alluded to. The great standing reproach of what is called Natural Religion has long been that it depends exclusively upon human reason and conscience for guidance, and does not place itself within the influence of the great personal centres, around whom the most active systems of religion range themselves. However true this may historically be of certain forms of natural Religion, the Brahmo Somaj cannot plead guilty to the charge. The Brahmos recognize the unavoidable necessity of placing themselves under the guidance of the great teachers, who, at different times, have taught the world the profound lessons of truth and salvation, from the light and life of inspiration. In the leaders of humanity, in the prophets who have been sent to announce the advent of higher destinies and newer dispensations than those which ruled the spiritual existence of mankind before them, the Brahmo Somaj has deep and devout faith. They are the mediums of certain truths which,

without them, could not have been imparted to the world. We shall have to speak more on this point as we proceed; here we content ourselves with making one remark only. The development of the many-sidedness of human nature, partial and inadequate views of which have started so many insoluble problems in the religious world, is not possible, but by the example of certain great characters who, within their limited sphere, have represented and reconciled a vast variety of phases, and widely different peculiarities of life, which human actions, under different circumstances, ordinarily present. The varying processes of the operation of the Divine Spirit in the soul of man, according to varying conditions of historical and theological life, are thus proved and justified in the career of men who carry with them the unmistakable credentials of a Divine commission. A faithful and devout recognition of such masters, it will be easily understood, establishes a true and lasting bond of union between the Brahmos and followers of other creeds, and concentrates into a focus the

influence of the most eminent religious characters in all ages and countries at whose feet humanity must at all times sit to learn the lessons of living truth.

Relations to Science and Philosophy.

One word is here necessary, perhaps, to acknowledge the indebtedness of the Brahmo Somaj to the progress of philosophical and scientific thought at the present day. Religious organisations of all kinds and orders, that have any historical claim or theological status to maintain, have suffered so seriously by the relentless researches and inexorable conclusions of modern scientific men, that in spite of much professed courage and unconcern, there is but little real inclination left in the apostles of religion to welcome or encourage the votaries of free philosophy. Nay, their ancient combats have grown only fiercer and more desperate; and if the leaders of scientific thought have shown any readiness to recognize "a soul of truth" in the complex theologies of the world, and if cautious theolo-

gians have expressed any wish to patronize science, there is perhaps the lurking desire on both sides to secure, by plausible compromises, their respective portions in the old battleground more completely than ever. "The soul of truth," graciously recognized on the one hand, is absolutely annihilated in the hopeless depths of the Unknowable in all things, and "the basis of emotion," to which religion is relegated with lofty philosophic courtesy, vanishes into thin air as soon as turned in the crucible of scientific analysis. On the other hand, the mock greeting ostentatiously held out to the advancing light of science, is converted into bitter anathema directly the scientific man ventures one step into the familiar preserves of traditional theology. All the encouragement vouchsafed to the study of the laws of nature has been principally with the hope that science may prove in the end to be the handmaid of supernaturalism. But in vain. A contrary result has taken place. The long-neglected rights of nature have been asserted with a distinctness and force which show, even to the most faint-sighted, on what side the faith

of the future must lie. The phenomena and orders of the universe; the processes and plans of creation; the dates and ages of events in the world; the formation, history, relations, and developments of mankind—these and many more things have slowly passed out of the hands of an all-absorbing and omnipotent priesthood. Say what we might in advocacy of the claims of man's primitive faith, when science speaks in her proper sphere, the religious man must often confess his ignorance, "sit still, and learn." Philosophy has fully established her competency, even at the exclusion of her old rival, to decide the methods and laws of the universe, the affinities and evolutions of phenomena so far as these can be ascertained; and those pious disputants, who want to carry the crusade into these forbidden territories, have, in the abundance of zeal, missed their vocation completely. On the other hand, the enquiry on the part of the scientific adventurer has been pushed into the depths, into the very confines of all being; the conflict has been carried to the very gates of the possible existence of a Supreme Cause. There he stops.

He has pursued the manifestations of life far and deep into their dark background of power,—further he cannot proceed, "its mystery overshadows him."* Who is to unravel the mystery now? Who is to hold up the torch when it "slips away" from the hand of the imperious, over-confident apostle of intellect? Let religion answer the question. The limits of scientific thought have been reached; let devout thoughts awake. In the long course of conflict to which allusion has been so often made, have we not learned to understand, however faintly, the deep and peculiar language in which religion delivers her great realities? When one speaks therefore of the Life, and Power, behind the universe, the mystery of which overshadows the intellect of the philosopher, let the latter in his turn "sit still, and learn." Science has

* "When I attempt to give the power which I see manifested in the universe an objective form, personal or otherwise, it slips away from me, declining all intellectual manipulation. I dare not use the pronoun 'He' regarding it; I dare not call it a 'Mind'; I refuse to call it even a 'Cause.' Its mystery overshadows me."—PROF. TYNDALL, *in the Fortnightly Review for December* 1875.

delivered her message: why should not a fair opportunity be now given to religion to convey *her* new gospel, and make it "the gospel of glad tidings," if she can? The Theism of the Brahmo Somaj, in its progressive development as a new Divine dispensation, professes to preach that gospel. But let it be remembered that the world wants more than preaching now. That *preaching* must be equivalent to *being*. That may take a long while yet, and in the meantime we may just briefly summarise the obligations which religious men owe to science. Firstly, then, mighty and destructive errors have been demolished, and so much space cleared for the establishment of positive truth by the researches and conclusions of modern philosophy. True religion, disburdened of these errors, may now proceed freely on its way. In the second place, invaluable aid has been rendered to the cause of rational faith, by the discovery of that continuity, order, and connection in all departments of physical life, in the absence of which there have been considerable difficulties for a long time in the argument of a harmonious, persistent,

and consummate design in the creation, and maintenance of the world. The imputation of whim, of arbitrary and freakful fiats in the authorship and providence of the universe, is no longer possible. In the third place, the provinces of religion and science have been so clearly marked out and defined that, unless the inquirers of either completely mistake their calling, there cannot be any collision between the two. The sphere of religion has been pointed out, and if religious men have life enough to supply the incessant demand for a higher life made by mankind, in that sphere faith shall exercise its power undisputed by the old rivalries of the past. For all these and similar advantages conferred by the advancement of knowledge upon the progressive religion of mankind, the Brahmo Somaj feels profoundly thankful to the apostles of science. Their speculations and discoveries have been a great source of truth to that institution.

The Real character of the Brahmo Somaj.

In what has been said above there is certainly

not much to indicate any real or great originality in the religion of the Brahmo Somaj. It presents itself, to a great extent, as an order of theological eclecticism based on the religious wants of mankind. Now whatever may be said in favour of an attempted synthesis of religious thought, there is no doubt that any mere theological generalisation does not satisfy the deep and powerful cravings of the human heart. For the philosophical, for the thoughtful, for the careful student of theologies who has watched and analyzed the origin and development of creeds, this has an interest. But it is altogether so abstract and erudite, so devoid of colour and taste, that the millions of the uncultured and unthoughtful, and above all the sinful and the restless, demand something easier and more practical to hold by. This is exactly the charge which is sometimes brought against the Brahmo Somaj, and we must see how far it is substantiated by facts.

All the criticism hitherto instituted on the religion of the Brahmo Somaj has been a more or less accurate examination of the philosophical

principles which the development of that institution has brought to the surface, or suggested to the public mind. Few have taken the trouble to think that there are other sides of the movement, and much more important ones too, than what critics have been concerned with up to this time. It is something of course that the theists of India have abandoned the old pursuit of protesting against the errors of other systems, and building for themselves a structure of negations founded on no more solid basis than an abstract belief in the existence and attributes of the Deity distilled from the crude speculations of the old systems of Natural Theology. With the advance of scientific thought and research, the views of nature have been so materially altered during the last half a century that Natural Theology, to be at all acceptable to thoughtful men, must considerably change its standpoint, and even then cannot be trusted as the principal and abiding source, albeit that a secondary source it will ever continue to be, of the faith of the future. If, therefore, the Brahmo Somaj is found to possess a definite and positive

system of religion, however incomplete that may yet be, and however humble its pretensions, its origin must be sought for in something else than mere speculations on the nature of the cosmos, or of man, or the oft-repeated shortcomings of competing creeds seen around. What that something is we will now try to examine.

Fervid Devotions.

Those who have any intimate acquaintance with the progress and proceedings of the Brahmo Somaj will at once concur with the statement that for a long time the most prominent feature among leading Brahmos in its membership has been a persistent cultivation of devotional feelings. The spirit of devotion has been cherished with great and special enthusiasm since the unfortunate rupture in the Brahmo Somaj in 1865. The following few lines from an article on the Survey of the Brahmo Somaj Mission that appeared in the *Theistic Annual* of 1874 will give an idea of what we mean :—

"After the establishment of the Brahmo Somaj of India in 1866, such a strange influx of devotional excitement set in among the Progressive Brahmos, that it has

permanently changed their character, and defined the future of their institution. The first devotional festival or *Brahmotsub* was celebrated about the end of 1867. And since then the Brahmo Somaj has been speedily running through phases of spiritual development which has ushered in a stage of devotional blessedness never experienced before. Among all our different missionary agencies nothing has contributed so much to the success and spread of our movement as the order of Divine worship prescribed by the Brahmo Somaj of India."

The manifestations of devotional excitement in large Brahmo congregations at the time of festivals and annual gatherings, have often been so strong, that on witnessing them we have been reminded of nothing so much as those powerful religious revivals which, among the Vaishnavas and the Sikhs, have been so prolific of social consequences vastly important to the growth and history of Indian races. It is the women and the young that are soonest affected, but it cannot be said that they retain the impressions long, The men are more slow to catch the influence, but when they have caught it, which they are sure to do under the effectual appeals which their leaders know so well how to make to their hearts, they retain the impression long, and find their practical lives considerably changed thereby.

This has sometimes led to the charge that Brahmo ministers and missionaries always encourage sentimental development, at the sacrifice of intellectual solidity. We may here just point out how contradictory this charge is to the general accusation that the Brahmos have for their religion a system of dry rationalism. Whatever truth or falsehood there may be in these contradictory accusations, this much is at all events certain, that in equal predominance, if not in vast excess of the philosophical element, there is in the religion of the Brahmo Somaj the eminently popular element of emotional fervour, which, in the history of all active systems of faith, has been such a mighty instrument in the propagation of truth and sanctity, among all classes, but more specially among the less cultivated portions of society. Those, therefore, who complain of the cold abstractions of the religion of the Brahmo Somaj, either possess no personal knowledge of the movement, or, we should be sorry to suppose, choose to suppress well-known facts with a view to represent it at a disadvantage before the public. It may

not be out of place to state here that some of the discreet Christian Missionaries in and about Calcutta, seeing the effect of Brahmo popular hymns *(Sunkeertan)*, have introduced this method of singing in the midst of their own congregations, we hope with good effect. The Brahmos are glad of this circumstance, because their own ideas of spirituality, like many of their doctrines, have been influenced by other systems, and perhaps by nothing more, than by the spirit of Christian devotions. All that is profound and beautiful in the worship of other denominations has been reverently adopted, and blended with the broadening currents of devotional fervour in the Brahmo's temple of prayer and praise. It is therefore perhaps that unsectarian minds among all orders of religionists sympathise with the sweet and simple worship of the Brahmo Somaj. We have already alluded to the fact that Hindus are moved thereby, and feel glad to give below an extract from a letter written not long ago by one of the leaders of religious thought in England: "The Theism of India speaks to me, not simply as objectively

interesting, but with an appeal to my inmost sympathies. It is your happy lot to have a true and living Faith, unencumbered by a load of traditional theology. We are so heavily weighted with a complex theology, that faith and love are half strangled by the burden, and have no stroke in their wings. But I will not complain or despond. The providence of the world assigns to us our place and work; and while I look with joy and hope on the mission offering before you in India, I am content, for my remaining days of service, to labour on 'the stony ground' of an exhausted Christendom, and try whether here and there the good seed can yet find some deepness of earth." Surely, then, the religion of the Brahmos is not a cold intellectual creed.

Moral Reforms.

Where this profusion of sentiment has led the Brahmo Somaj is the next point to consider. There is nothing so detrimental to the solidity of character as the waste of religious emotions. It makes barren and vulgarises man's nature, and

makes the whole subject of religion contemptible before judicious men. On the other hand, religion means very little without real and profound emotion, which turned upon the soil of the soul, makes both the intellect and the moral nature divinely fruitful, and produces such noble types of character as distinguish the apostleship of every great faith. Nothing can so powerfully refine and elevate human motives, intensify the necessity of self-purification and self-devotedness, open the inward eye to the most subtle and secret deficiencies of the heart, quicken the perception of others' needs, and unlock the sources of the deepest sympathies, as the cleansing, transforming currents of religious emotion rightly excited and rightly directed. If, from this point of view, we examine the results of the devotional fervour in the Brahmo Somaj, we shall find that the prominent members of that body have continually exerted themselves to purify the moral life of individuals, and the social atmosphere of the country in which they live. They have strenuously endeavoured also to propagate

their religion among their fellow countrymen. It does not fall within the scope of this essay to enumerate the practical and social reforms effected by the Brahmo Somaj since its foundation, nor can we stop to dwell upon the details of the operations of its missionaries in various parts of the country. But we think it can be stated with perfect fairness that with the progress of the spirit and operations of the movement, with the increase of its membership, the development of its principles, the propagation of its truths, almost every year has witnessed an ever-growing intensity of zeal to harmonise life and doctrine. The highest ideals of individual purity, missionary life, and social organisation, have been set forth in obedience to the profound aspirations of its eminent leader; and, though it cannot be pretended that all these ideals have been realised in their fulness and detail, yet we think it may be safely asserted that the moral character of the Somaj is universally respected and relied upon. The important reforms in various branches of life introduced by it have procured for it the sympathy of the liberal mem-

bers of other denominations, and the personal purity of the Brahmo's life does not go unrecognised. This is not said with the least object of magnifying the Brahmo Somaj in the estimation of our readers, but just to point out the fact that the emotional sensibility of that institution, instead of weakening and vulgarising the moral sense, as it has done so often in the world, has produced the most wholesome influence upon the will and active powers of the mind. The activities thus awakened have sometimes taken an unexpected direction, and the orthodox of all creeds have been startled by the revolutionary enthusiasm of Brahmo reformers. The extraordinary views on the subjects of female improvement, caste, and marriage—views which, unlike their countrymen, the Brahmo Somaj have carried out at considerable personal risk and social sacrifice—aroused at one time the bitter hostility of the Hindoo community. The uncomfortable ideas on the subjects of personal simplicity, austerely regulated habits, self-discipline, and self-control, faith, inspiration, prophets, and the New Dispensation,

preached by Brahmo leaders, have, at the present moment, produced sufficient dislike in certain quarters. But misconceptions in the one case have yielded before the persistent honesty of aspiration and effort, and by its unpopular reforms the Brahmo Somaj has, in the end, acquired more sympathy from the outside than it ever possessed before. So in the other case it may be hoped that popular misconceptions regarding the spiritual and peculiar practices of the advanced section of the Brahmo Somaj, will cease also. But before they cease, Brahmo devotees will have to prove that their austerities and self-denials, the new doctrines, the new rules and ceremonies they have adopted, have ended in the unmistakable exaltation and sanctity of their character, and in the propagation and establishment of their faith among the unbelieving and sceptical. The intense and profuse moral activities of a youthful religious institution will not, perhaps, obtain the unanimous sympathy of the public, especially from those sections of it which represent the easy-going worshippers of antique creeds and airy intellectualism, comfortably

settled, nicely endowed, who feel secure within the prescribed forms of respectable righteousness. But strong, real moral energy, admittedly liable to abuse and misdirection, proves at least an abundance of spiritual vitality that might be utilised under proper guidance to serve some of the noblest purposes of human existence. The world has sometimes suffered a great deal from the superfluous activities of sacred enthusiasts who have diverted the healthy and harmonious forces of man's nature to the service of abnormal systems of doctrine and practice, attractive as all monstrous things are, but short-lived, and perfectly unreal. Yet the gain is beyond all comparison with the loss when it is borne in mind what wonderful changes have been the results of such energetic action under the control of master-minds,—changes that have transfigured the thoughts, affections, and lives of great masses of mankind at the most critical periods of their history.

Personal Influence in the Brahmo Somaj.

The importance of personal influence in

shaping and guiding the destinies of a religious movement cannot be exaggerated. At the risk and considerable sacrifice of its popularity, the Brahmo Somaj has always upheld the supremacy and steadying power of personal influence. It is considered indispensable in the formation and preservation of religious systems. The shallow and thoughtless among the Brahmo body have been struck with panic at the idea of human centres for the religious development of humanity, the supplementary influences of man to the influences of the Divine Spirit, the former but a mode of communication for the latter, towards the regeneration of the race. The doctrine of Messiahship is one of the profoundest in all religions; it is so early and universal, and has been historically so uniformly efficacious in the origin and growth of all possible religious excellence, that we consider it unnatural and foolish to dispense with it summarily. Not that we mean to maintain for a single moment that personal religion of any kind is impossible, and much less that salvation is unattainable except through the medium of a

human, or *quasi*-divine agent, however exalted. In all ages and countries those that love God and work righteousness are acceptable before Him. But when great systems of faith and morality have to be established and worked out, vast moral revolutions have to be effected, great masses of mankind have to be converted—abstract and unauthorised principles, even if backed by the exuberance of emotion and ethical energy, cannot produce any permanent effect, though certainly a wide-spread agitation is not impossible for the time being. Great truths and great sentiments must settle and centralise, not in books, nor merely in institutions, but in souls to bear the test of time and circumstance. Whether it be one, or whether it be many that give witness unto the truth, such witnesses the world shall always demand for the assurance and permanence of its faith. The Brahmo Somaj cannot, on the other hand, shut its eyes to the gross, gigantic, and almost imperishable evils which an abuse of this principle has generated in the world, nor can the formidable difficulty and responsibility

of its application in the present age and circumstances of the world be ignored. But fear and hesitation, when the interests of truth are at stake, are foreign to all manliness and honesty of character; and in this, as in all other matters, the Brahmo Somaj must face its work, and do its duty to the best of its power. What then is the true mission of the prophet? He is the type of spiritual life. He is chiefly important in showing how man may have the gift of living revelation from the spirit of God. The perfect and the Infinite Spirit cannot in Himself exemplify the fact of limited spirituality and progressive goodness. The possibilities of human progress can be practically represented in man alone. Not that these possibilities can become actual in any one; but what *does* become actual, clearly shows what may be possible. The true Messiah, therefore, is not he who persuades men to aspire up to his standard in purity and spiritual excellence, and leaves them there to receive from him what he alone has to give. On the contrary, he is the true messenger of God who pours out the whole

energy of his being that others may be carried directly into the presence of God, and, left there by themselves, may forget everything else in the supreme fact of Divine Communion immediate and personal. The powers of the intellect and will are held in temporary suspension, or rather are in a state of unconscious activity, and man becomes the free but passive recipient of supreme blessedness, which exceeds all ordinary endeavours and hopes quite unspeakably. As all the prominent members of the Brahmo Somaj have laboured and aspired to arrive at this condition of spiritual life, which is said to be solitary and social at the same time, hidden and yet diffusive, we should try to explain ourselves more fully.

Direct Approach to God.

Firstly, then, the Brahmo Somaj attempts by its devotional experience to solve the great religious problem as to whether the Supreme and Infinite Spirit can be *directly* approached and worshipped by every individual soul. In the very humblest among mankind there

are fit elements, and a fit place for the spiritual relationship and filial attitude, whereby the pure and blessed Spirit of God is accessible, adorable, visible, communicable, and attainable amidst the aspirations and trials of life. The close, personal, and tender relations with the Divine Father for the formation and consummation of which incarnations have been so often resorted to, are not only possible, but realisable in life, where man's soul understands and keeps the laws of spiritual dependence. Of course help is necessary for this; such help as man can render man, but of the measure and the kind of help requisite we have already spoken. Nevertheless the direct object, the entire aspiration, the whole destiny of man is, that he may see face to face, love devoutly, and be at one with his God without the least obstruction or substitution, or medium of a third personality. All other personalities, even the sublimest and most beneficent, consent to tarry behind, while the individual soul proceeds in awe to meet the direct presence of the infinitely Alone. God as

the Father of all human souls, the Source of all that is pure and true in the universe, the Eternal Enlivener and infinite Centre of all practical and spiritual goodness, wherever found, is hardly recognisable by our filial instincts, if labouring under the weight of a denominational theology, we view Him through the mouldy medium of ancient dispensations, and endless mediators. The Brahmo Somaj accepts no mediator between God and man. The direct and distinct realisation of, and perfect self-immersion in, the supreme fact of Divine presence and blessedness constitutes the foremost element in the Brahmo doctrine of spirituality. In the second place, the truth thus acquired leads to a very important consideration, namely, the fraternal union of all mankind in the spirit of Divine truth and love. This is neither realisable, nor even thinkable when the vast majority of the human family lie condemned and disabled, the perception and attainment of Supreme Blessedness being taken away from them on account of non-subscription to certain creeds and ecclesiastical forms which their reason and

conscience alike repudiate. Much has been said and done to explain and exemplify Divine love. But very little has been said, and much less practised in illustration of the brotherhood of man. The great ambition of the Brahmo Somaj is to show some practical example in this direction. That the profound and joyful fellowship of souls is possible, nay realisable in common relationship to the central principle of Divine communion, from which all true worshippers draw their spiritual sustenance and strength, has been, though very imperfectly, an experience in the Brahmo Somaj. That justice, honor, and reverence may be accorded to every individual, to every sect, to every church, and to all mankind for the incalculable moral and religious benefit received from each in the formation of the world's spiritual practical life,—benefit not due to one, but to all systems and workers of good, is equally an experience. A devout and faithful contemplation of this truth changes very much the existing relations of theological life, and in the consciousness of the altered conditions of moral and religious relationship,

the basis of a new society for mankind is obtained. As the changes that come from within are always more powerful than those that come from without, the society so founded receives purity, strength, coherence, and joyfulness in its organisation which is but the reflex of the spiritual development of those who feel inwardly propelled to establish it. This is the Kingdom of Heaven. Men coming out of various states of national growth, social influence, and religious culture, are recognised as members of one family, and welded together into one brotherhood. The differences of taste, training, habit, and birth are harmonised without much difficulty. The claims of each person and sect obtain a cheerful recognition. The faithful band of worshippers and believers expands in their faith into a world-wide fraternity. The cardinal truth of the brotherhood of men thus realised and united with the supreme doctrine of God's fatherhood, places before the Brahmo Somaj the ideal of the true and lasting religion of the future.

Formation of Principles.

How have these and other doctrines of the Brahmo Somaj come to be formed is an important question. Most of the opponents, and some of the friends of that institution, are apt to suppose that the leader or leaders of the movement have by great efforts of the understanding, by deliberation and mutual counsel, elaborated a system of opinions in which they and their followers believe. A greater mistake there could not be. The leaders of the Brahmo Somaj began their career by a strong protest against dogmatism, and if at the present moment they themselves have come to hold certain very definite views which they set forth with some show of authority and certainty, this fact must be accounted for. Now the protests of the Brahmo Somaj on the subject are as little understood as the doctrines it propounds. It is the lifeless mass of complex theology, inherited by tradition, enforced by external authority, unrealised by spiritual experience, contradicted repeatedly by the spirit of the times, and the ascertained laws of things, that the Brahmo Somaj repu-

diates. The worship of opinions, as opinions however sacred, however ancient, apart from the spirit, is what every man, who cares for living truth, must condemn always. But there may be opinions of a quite different character. The great and really profound doctrines of religion are never formed by the laboured and artificial processes of self-imposed thought, but deposited within the mind in imperceptible accretions by the deep flow of spiritual impulses. As the soul seeks for light, life, and inspiration, and the flood of divine influence sets in, it leaves behind certain impressions and experiences, which, by repeated occurrence, settle and crystallize into definite shapes, being afterwards known and taught as the realities of religious life. When these are formulated and expressed in words they become what we call the doctrines of religion. The principles of the Brahmo Somaj, few and elementary as they are, have been the results of this inward process. The views, then, which the Brahmo has expressed from time to time on the Divine Nature and attributes, the relations and attitudes which

human nature must bear thereto, and the moral and spiritual relations of men to each other, are but deep internal experiences repeatedly felt and sanctioned by the concurrence of many souls similarly circumstanced. Duties which have naturally suggested themselves in the train of such inward light; duties to individuals, to families, and to society, when performed faithfully, have come to take the shape of practical and social reforms. Whether we consider then the doctrines or the practices of the Brahmo Somaj, they are the natural fruits of the action of the Spirit of truth in the human heart. Put into words these principles have often savoured of Christianity or Hinduism, according as the phraseology used to embody them has been English or Sanscrit in the history of its formation. This is, we own, seriously disadvantageous, and gives the truths of the religion of the Brahmo Somaj an unoriginal and imitative aspect highly favorable to the purposes of those who wait for opportunities to misrepresent them. But from this disadvantage Brahmos must, for some time yet, consent to suffer

till the spiritual individuality of their church becomes more distinctly and widely known. Those who however care to inquire with any degree of earnestness will easily find out that the doctrines, principles, and practices of the Brahmo Somaj, as set forth in the history and spirit of the movement, have a significance peculiar to themselves alone.

We have tried to give above a bare sketch of the religion of the Brahmo Somaj, but feel that we have not been able to do justice to the subject, because the religion of the Brahmo Somaj is not yet complete. When a religion is still in the process of formation, its principles continually expand and modify, and it is neither wise nor just for any one to attempt to fasten on them the rigid fixity which every form of written interpretation must, more or less, bring with it. The fluent and progressive character of a youthful faith constitutes at once its danger and its life : the life is a life of self-exertion, moral advancement, doctrinal fulness, prayer, faith, and divine guidance : the danger is the danger of self-delusion, idleness, spiritual conceit, error,

and moral confusion. In courting the danger, the Brahmo Somaj claims also some measure of the life aforesaid. Those who warn it of the former should likewise encourage it for the latter. So far as its career has gone, the efforts of the Brahmo Somaj to know and hold by the truth, as knowable in spiritual consciousness, as knowable in half a century of social and moral struggle, as knowable in the faith and experiences of mankind in the past, have been steady, earnest, and sincere. Amply rewarded in all such efforts, its faith in the future is great and sure. Yet it is impossible to foresee that future distinctly. That there are many imperfections, and some of them serious, in the organisation and internal economy of the institution, no one can deny. That some of its important principles, partially ascertained in devotional and practical experience, still require the full testimony of life and character, is equally undeniable. The faith of the Brahmo is incomparably higher than his actual being. Let us hope that his earnest strivings *to be* what he *believes* will be crowned with success; and that

between aspiration and achievement, life and doctrine, faith and organisation, there will be, as the Brahmo Somaj grows older and maturer, a more complete harmony than has been hitherto attainable in that, or any other institution of which we know.

Hindu and Christian Influence in the Brahmo Somaj.

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RECENT events have brought into prominence certain special characteristics of religious life which cannot but exercise great influence upon the future of our movement. The Hindu type of piety, as forming a distinct ideal, out of which to mould the character and aspirations of men at the present time—men who have ceased to believe in Hinduism as a religion, and even formally given up the privilege of claiming the Hindu name in a religious sense, though that name includes all forms of conflicting opinion, and hostile sects beyond number, presents an interesting subject of study, and problems which have not yet been solved by the Brahmo Somaj. On the other hand the European standards of religious culture which pervade the history, principles, and plans of life hitherto laid down by our church, and which in fact underlie almost all the social and moral influences that work together to re-make and revivify educated Hindu society in these

times, contain within them germs and potencies of truth, life, and progress which we cannot with any show of consistency now set aside. That the future of Indian society and religion cannot be a reproduction of European dogmas and methods of life, seems almost to be an axiomatic truth. And it appears equally true that the spirit of the age, its endless formations and developments on every side, cannot be confined within the time-expired boundaries, and rigid ordinations of Hindu law-givers, or the authorised principles of Hindu philosophy and custom. Any attempt, therefore, to introduce in a narrow and literal sense the forms of the past to embody the aspirations and struggles of the present, is like the introduction of the coldness of death into the warm abodes of ardent life and health. The words of the late Viceroy, Lord Northbrook, on the eve of his departure from these shores, as His Excellency tried to sum up the prospects of the Brahmo Somaj and Christianity, were full of truth and impartiality. The experienced eye of that practised observer of men clearly saw what he

candidly confessed, namely that neither his own faith, nor that of the Brahmo Somaj, as far as then developed, could survive the transitions and advancements of thought observable in modern India. A reflection like this is obviously liable to various misconstructions, and seeing that Lord Northbrook is a High Churchman and pretty orthodox too in outward observances, opponents of the Brahmo Somaj may doubt the whole subject of the sincerity of his sympathy with that movement, and religious radicals of all sorts outside the pale of the Established Church may interpret the prophecy very favorably to themselves. But we obtain only an additional stimulus from all this to review our own principles and prospects. Not because we think the late Viceroy's words very definite in their significance, or clear in any belief that they set forth for the future of India, but that they are pregnant at least with one suggestion, which is this :—How far can the Brahmo Somaj ignore the past processes of development recorded in the scriptural thought and hereditary belief of this great people, their

natural aptitudes, advantages, tendencies, and instincts; and how much can we still hold in common with the peculiar religious genius possessed by the ancient and mediæval branches of the vast Indo-Aryan race.

The difficulty of approaching this subject with a clearly practical view, so that we may evolve out of it some determinate rules and apply them to the actual relations of life, has left it up to this time in the region of theory. While some have been foremost to raise the hue and cry of Nationality, they have done little, or at least nothing more to rekindle the real genius of the Hindu nation, than those who have quietly forgotten the fact that Hindus are not Europeans, and must not be educated in morality, religion, and social reform as if they were. Surely the great millions who constitute the population of this country may very well afford to overlook the occidental inclinations of a handful of young amateurs whom an essentially unEnglish description of English education has trained to the habit of condemning everything which they do not

understand, and who are forward to perform experiments upon society and religion, for the consequences of which they have as little wish as ability to be responsible. But educated men, who are accustomed to think twice before they take a definite line of action, cannot but pay the deepest attention to the wants, instincts, and difficulties of the prodigious masses of their countrymen who are bred to think, feel, and act in ways so very different from their own. We are ready to admit that men who live under strictly Western models have their use, and are advantageous to society at large in a particular manner. They furnish us with important facts to determine the value and suitableness of certain forms of thought and life. Leaving them to pursue their course independently, the interests of those who virtually compose the bulk of Hindu society must be represented by such as really identify themselves with their actual wants and welfare.

With these considerations present in our mind, we cannot but view with interest and concern the greater attention devoted by our

leaders to embody amongst themselves in a practical and intelligible shape some of the cardinal principles, ideas, and forms of religion which have been, or now are, prevalent in this country. We are warned, and with good reason too, that the atmosphere of Hindu thought has been in every age perfectly inimical to the growth of foreign influences and virtues of all sorts; and, unless we are exceptionally careful to rear in the midst of ourselves the outside aids and sympathies which have done so much to develop our movement and its various branches, we may gradually lose the many-sidedness and catholicity of character which distinguishes us from all other churches and organizations in the world. The valuable agencies of life, thought, and feeling imparted to us from the West must multiply and deepen, and invigorate the roots of our character and our work. It will be perfectly suicidal if they are suffered to grow feeble and inoperative. and if the departments of our organization to which they relate consequently languish, shrink, and collapse altogether. And there is not much

doubt that this result will follow, unless we are careful enough to combine the spirit of the East and West in all our endeavours after spiritual and practical life. The reconciliation of the varying standards of religious culture prevalent among these two important sections of the human race is a problem whose solution must some day be presented by the Brahmo Somaj, if that institution is to prove true to its mission. The progress yet made towards that solution cannot be said to be very great, but every step in advance is important, and we need not make any apology, we suppose, to set down one or two thoughts that occur to us on the subject.

The position of the Brahmo Somaj is one of great advantage. In agreeing more of less with other systems of faith the Brahmo Somaj commands the sympathy of all religious sects and communities. When Hindus find that the Brahmo retains the old spirit of national religion; draws largely for their ideas upon the sacred writings of the country, they cannot but sympathize with him, join him, and help him

occasionally. When again, on the other hand, Christians find that the Brahmo draws also very largely upon their scriptures, and hold the teachings of Christ in great reverence, they cannot but offer some encouragement and sympathy. Nay even the Mahomedans, who are so intolerant to all other sects, cannot withhold their good feeling from the Brahmo Somaj. But if the position of the Somaj is one of advantage, it is also one of great disadvantage. The Brahmo Somaj differs more or less from every known system of religion. Just as by agreeing with other religious communities the Somaj gets their sympathy, so by differing from them it is looked upon with disapprobation. When Hindus find that the Brahmo does not respect the infallibility of the Veds, object to Hindu philosophy, Hindu theology, and Hindu law, and wants to introduce daring innovations into the present state of society, the sympathy previously felt melts away, and faithful Hindus discourage the heretical Brahmo, reproach him, and persecute him. The great problem before the Brahmo Somaj, therefore, has always

been how to accept the wholesome influences of Hinduism and Christianity, and at the same time to steer clear of the dangers which identification with either the one or the other, might give rise to. In order that this might be done it is necessary to analyse the fundamental principles of the two religions, and point out the action of both on the Brahmo Somaj.

Dissociating religion from all accidents and local accretions of meaning, its essence will be found to lie in spiritual union with the Divine Spirit. Of course, we are not supposed to exclude any branch of our duties to ourselves, or to the world at large, when we aspire after such union. It includes the healthy action of the mind, heart, and will, all aspirations, views, and affections, all the relations of individual and collective life that may be thought of. When St. Paul utters his well-known words—"In Him we live, move, and have our being—," when the author of the *Bhagavat Gita* speaks of our being "soul united" with the Deity, they express the essence of true religion. Some thinkers have tried to draw our attention to the close and

surprising similarity which has been found to exist between widely different systems of religion, and with characteristic unwisdom attempted very hard to prove the prevalence of something like a universal habit of plagiarism among the pious founders of men's faith. The large amount of scholarship expended to substantiate this unfortunate charge, might have been far better applied, not in exposing the verbal analogies among writers on similar subjects, but the union of heart which their subjects had created in them. Perhaps no extent of mere scholarship is competent to perceive the intense and wonderful harmony that pervades the inner existence of souls inspired with a common enthusiasm for anything truly great. And when, as in the case of religious men, the object of that enthusiasm is common, and presents a depth of soul in which unspeakable beauty, blessedness, truth, and light mingle in an Infinite Personality which absorbs everything in its vastness and perfectness, the impulse imparted by the two-fold union strikes out of the chords of humanity a harmony with which the

whole heaven and earth become full. What wonder then that those men who, in different countries and ages, have heard within their souls the celestial music of united affection and will with the Father of truth and goodness, should plead their beautiful experiences in words, which, despite the accidents of time and place, are fragrant with a kindred sweetness, and bright with a congenial glow? There is a close family-likeness between souls that have found their home and their reconciliation in God. It is in this sense that we so often hear that union with God most surely leads to union with mankind. And, therefore, we think we can safely maintain that the East and the West can be reunited in spiritual union, when they are both united with the Eternal Source of truth and light.

The Hindu, surrounded by the solemn stillness of daybreak and sunset in his land of deep rivers and dense shades, seated on the great heights and slopes of his ancient mountains, silent, snow-clad, and eternal, falls into profound calmness and sympathy with the scene around him. The heat which moderates the

flow of his spirits; the food which sedates and seldom stimulates his blood; the heavy hard work of the day which leaves him but little activity at its close; the many anxieties and vexations of life that demand a respite and suggest thoughts of repose and peace,—all these easily lead him away to the paths of contemplation. His fathers before him, and the great authors of the immortal classics of his country, the saints and sages, advise him repeatedly, and show him, by example, how to forsake the petty troubles and trials of the world, and drown everything in the great illimitable sea of wisdom which spreads on all sides. If he is a reader of the *shasters*, they teach him that only One thing is real, that there is only One Life, that underlying this endless hollow of the universe there is only One Spirit. And he who finds Him, finds rest. To other things, therefore, he is inclined to grow indifferent, and to the struggles and sorrows of the world to turn his back. The One Reality, the One Life, the One Spirit, he vaguely aspires to seek, and to meditate upon, to read of, to hear of, and trace in solitudes

and solemn places, and in the lives and teachings of great men. This is the way to the Hindu idea of Divine Communion, *yoga*. Drive him into the paths of ceaseless activity, bind him to the many cares and affairs of the unreal world, distract him with the thoughts and desires of things that he knows must one day vanish, and he straightway loses everything that is noble and good in his nature. And if he is to have any religion, the nature of that religion must be adapted to his nature. The history of Hinduism is full of encouragement and aid to the growth of this spirit. The symbols of worship in the *vedas*,—the infinite azure of the clear sky, the breathless tranquility of the dawn and twilight, the silent sun shedding his all-revealing effulgence, the winds that travel softly refreshing all things in their breezy embrace, the sacrificial fire that quietly sends up its smoke into the still atmosphere, breathe only repose and contemplation, and calm observation of nature. And then the sublime self-immersion of the *Upanishads*, the rapt mind beholding the Spirit of all things in

itself, the secret of the whole universe revealed within the soul, the Heaven of heavens in the heart, the Fire that kindles all fire, the Life that breathes itself into all existence, tend to create a glorious idealism before which the hard and hardening world of matter hides its diminished head. And the holy men, the saints of Hindu society, the *Rishis*, who were at once the priests of nature, the counsellors of kings, the moral guardians of society, the conservers of wisdom, learning and piety, earned their reputation and holiness by yielding to the impulses of such all-absorbing spirituality. All *gribastas* (men having households) were at a certain stage of life solemnly advised to leave the affairs of the world, and devote their last years to such meditation, calmness, and communion with the Deity. The renunciation of the world, the adoption of *vairagya*, or a life of asceticism more or less rigorous, a continued removal from the harrassments and distractions of commonplace every-day existence, self-inflicted poverty, a passive and unresisting endurance of the evils and sufferings of the flesh,—these constitute

the unavoidable condition of religious life in the estimation of the Hindu. There is not much doubt that the fulfilment of this condition is, in certain natures, and under certain circumstances, highly favorable to the attainment of that union in spirit with the Supreme being which the Hindu of all other men most anxiously aspires for.

But then such contemplative union, so essentially adapted to the constitution of the Hindu mind, generally speaking, is not suitable in all cases alike. There is another order of mind among the people of this country, equally prevalent, and perhaps much more universal, among the great masses of the nation. The emotional element in the Hindu heart is very strong and very tender. Among the higher classes the intellect may be subtle, habits well-regulated, the heart fortified for flights of thought, and rigors of abstraction ; religion and philosophy flowing from a common fountain, unite in systems of religious culture and deep utterances of speculative and spiritual rapture, so characteristic of Hindu writings. But the

great heart of the nation throbs with intense feeling. The warm love of Hari* glowed in the heart of Narada as that saintly Rishi, white with age, sang and played on his *vina*, and alone, or with many, melted in the sweet tenderness of his own strains. The boy Pralhada, a king's son, and destined to fill the throne, shed many tears over Hari's beloved name, and suffered persecution, the recital of which in popular ballads still makes many eyes wet. It is said that Vyasa, after he had written the great poem of the *Mahabharata*, felt strongly restless in his mind, and with the object of obtaining the peace which he so much needed, spoke with Narada: "Thou hast written of wisdom Vyasa, and of the merit of works; thou hast taught men of the things of this world. This cannot give thee joy and peace. Speak, O Vyasa, of the love of God, and thy heart will be at rest." The great bard accordingly discoursed of the sweetness of *Bhakti*, in the *Srimad Bhagavata*, and his spirit departed in gladness and tranquillity to the man-

* The word Hari means one who takes away sins.

sions of the blessed. And so in ancient and modern times, parallel to the culture of contemplation and *yogic* calmness, there has been the culture of emotional fervour, and enthusiastic love. At different epochs, under various leaders, repeatedly has the great doctrine of the intense love of God been preached. From very ancient times down to the days of Chaitanya, this has been the direction and bent of the popular mind. Ecstatic devotion, the rapture of the heart, the perfect inebriation of the whole nature in the overwhelming sense of the Lord's goodness and tenderness, the zeal, the enthusiasm, the madness of piety,—all this has strongly characterised the path of the love of God. The result of this emotional exaltation has been excessive humility, great sanctity, and mercifulness in life, a profound perception of the beauty, the sweetness, the transforming power of Divine love. The followers of the doctrine of Divine love, or *Bhaktas*, as they are distinctively called, have been ever known by their mildness, meekness, purity, and tenderness to all living objects. Their hymns are very sweet sometimes, and

very enthusiastic at other times; their language has been always glowing with imagery, enriched with the wealth of delicate spirituality, enchanting the soul of all men, specially when the sorrows and trials of life predispose them to religious impulses. The union sought here is the union of love, the union of master and servant, of the Friend with the friend, of the poor and sin-stricken with the Protector and Saviour of sinners. Thousands, tens of thousands in all parts and all races of the country—men who could not have been touched by any other agency—have been awakened, converted, fired with enthusiasm, and from vile sinners made into examples of piety and purity by the influence of the doctrine of Divine love as known in this country. And hence the fundamental doctrine of *Bhakti* cannot be neglected in any lasting scheme of religious reform in India. But here too the doctrine of renunciation of the world has been equally in vogue. The emotional excitement produced by the love of God has been known to foster a strong dislike of worldly avocations, and the leading apostles of

this doctrine have forsaken the world, and devoted their whole existence to sing, and hear, and preach the beloved name of Hari. The principle of Renunciation, *Vairagya*, therefore, is perfectly well recognised by the Vishnavas, among whom the doctrine of Divine love finds its fullest embodiment.

The great department of religion which teaches the important truth of service to fellowmen does not go wholly unrepresented in Hinduism. The tenderness awakened in the heart by the piety of the Vishnava cannot but soften and sweeten the devotee's spirit towards those who love God as intensely, or more intensely, than himself. It is considered a chief duty of the devotee, therefore, to be of service to fellow-worshippers and fellow-servants. He will refuse no menial work, shrink from no hard labour, he will not consider his piety complete, unless he has been able to satisfy the *Bhakta*, or lover of God by serving him and making him comfortable. The principle of honoring good men, and ministering unto their wants, has been universal in this country; and the

unnatural deference that has been paid to Brahmans, and the inordinate reverence in which religious devotees of all classes have been held, is to be traced to this source. Union with good men is considered only next to union with God, and their grace and blessing are essential to a full realisation of the grace and blessing of Heaven.

One other tendency of the Hindu mind we shall briefly allude to. It is the natural devotion to intellectual keenness. The Great Shunker Acharya of Western India may be said to be the champion of this tendency in comparatively modern times. But Kapil, Goutam, Vyas, and Kanad, all represent the wonderful intellect of the Hindu mind. Every system of truth in the region of Hinduism is in fact supported more or less by intellectual power, and even the Vaishnavas themselves, who have so warmly denounced the pride of learning, have not considered it beneath them to fortify their own system by elaborate interpretations and applications of the shasters. The cultivation of the critical and logical faculties has

been exalted into undue eminence very often, and hence the subtleties and abstractions of which our national writings are full.

After a general analysis of the Hindu religion therefore as we find it, we may resolve the tendencies of the national mind first into a natural proneness to all absorbing contemplation, calm and intense communion (*yoga*) with the omni-active and all-pervading Spirit of the universe; and, secondly, into a proneness to emotional fervor, and tender love of God (*Bhakti*), manifested by the whole devotional literature of the country from very early times. The tendency to renounce the world, and encounter physical sufferings for the sake of salvation (*vyragya*) is the common condition of attaining maturity in every department of religious pursuit. The service *(shaba)* rendered to holy men is also a common characteristic of all schools. And the great devotion to intellectual soundness, *(gyan)* shown and fostered at all times, has been considered equally important by all systems of religious speculation in the country. Now the doctrines which

have resulted from these tendencies have often been characterised by their extravagance, but even the extremes to which they have been carried, serve to distinguish the predominant traits lying at the bottom of the whole fabric of Hindu thought and faith. They suggest important lessons as to the future religion which we believe will re-unite the scattered millions of the Indian population. The Brahmo Somaj has, therefore, freely availed itself of the great influences of Hinduism here inculcated, and it is the superficial only who have found fault with the *Yoga*, *Bhakti*, *Vairagya* and *Gyan*, which our church has cultivated in the spirit of strict Theism.

We are far from maintaining that the religious history of Europe does not present parallel tendencies and processes of development to what we have attempted to describe above. The inward operations of the human soul which seeks union with the Spirit Supreme, seem to reproduce themselves times without number both in the East and West, though in perfect independence of each other, and often with those local and national peculiarities which are

inseparable from natural and free developments. The readers of the life and works of St. Augustine cannot but be strongly impressed with the close and marked similarities, which the glowing spirituality of that wonderful man presents to the spiritual and enraptured utterances of some of the Upanishads. The essence of true communion or *yoga* is manifest in both alike. In the Sanskrit writings it is sublimated into the accustomed pantheism of all Hindu speculations, and in the heroic African saint it retains all the fragrance and freshness of a deep and natural devotion. The Augustinian type of idealism, the meditative spirituality which finds the centre of all forms of life and beauty, joy and sanctity, in the Perfect Source of universal and manifold being, can only be likened to the profound realization of the meaning of all existence which the ancient Hindu arrived at in the regions of the inner spirit. Then, again, the powerful and almost supernatural upheaval of religious life in the love and "friendship" to God, which distinguished the beliefs and speculations of great German minds

in the fourteenth century, when the differences between the Papal and Imperial Courts plunged the whole population of Germany in horrible trials and sufferings, reminds one of nothing so much as the mental phenomena which followed, at various times, the revival and propagation of the doctrine of Kabir and Chaitanya. The speculations of Eckart, Tauler, and Nicholas of Basle, and the author of Theologia Germanica, the beautiful teachings of that singular book The Imitation of Christ, by whomsoever written, can find parallel only in the history of the Vaishnavas. If any modern sect of Christians, psychologically considered, can exercise any real influence upon the minds of people in this country, it is the ardent denomination of Wesleyans, in whom the Hindu doctrine of the love of God finds very fair representation. No one, outside the pale of our society, can form any adequate notion of the admiration in which the missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church are held in the popular mind for their simple and rigorous habits of personal life. Painful and damaging reports are sedu-

lously circulated against these hardy champions of Christianity by their Protestant brethren, but the Hindu's natural instinct of appreciating the right worth of religious men finds out without much difficulty that the ascetic *Vairagya* of the Roman Catholic priest is much more favorable to the propagation of the Christian faith in India than the self-indulgent ease of reformed sectarians who are apt in criticism, but backward in self-sacrifice. The whole institution of monasticism has the Hindu spirit and idea in it, the vows of purity, poverty, and obedience are essentially Hindu in conception. In the department of intellectual subtlety also, the speculations of the Schoolmen completely equal the elaborations of the Sankhya and Nya philosophy, and the metaphysical and theological abstractions of Europe and India have led to quite an approximate extent of absurdity and mischief.

But nevertheless Europe has her exclusive peculiarities. The organization of a great community, under the authority and guidance of a Central Church, brings into existence

powers of combination, individual and social activities, moral and physical resources, and practical developments of all kinds which isolated into small groups, and individual thinkers, we have but seldom realised in India. Religion has been actually organised into a Kingdom in Europe, and though its history and internal affairs have not closely resembled the ideas of the Kingdom of Heaven, whose arrival the founder of the Christian faith so gloriously announced, yet there is no doubt that the vast means, adaptations, and appliances, the close watchfulness, the control over the principalities and populations of the world, requisite to keep such a kingdom in order, have deeply, and essentially, and for ever, modified the religious position of the European. All this entails a discipline and strong exercise of the element of manliness and will in the human mind, which binds up and calls out the practical decisions and active energies of character. A European minister of religion, say like Fenelon, or Jeremy Taylor; a European religious reformer, say like Luther or Savonarola, would

perhaps have many traits of character in common with the Hindu *sadhak* and *guru*, but there would be political, social, personal, and above all, moral differences of a very serious character. Consequent upon the ideas and principles imbibed by them, and assimilated into their nature by the influence of their ecclesiastical and social surroundings, as well as the practical demands made upon them by their congregation, their government, their church, and the world at large, there will be a peculiar determination and decision of character, a peculiar culture of the will and active faculties in them, unmatched by anything we can here show. And every movement, whether here or elsewhere, that purposes to organise itself into a Central Church, and not into a mere fraternity of retired devotees and self-absorbed mystics, wanting to regulate and govern the social, moral, and domestic affairs of its members, has to learn great lessons from the singular experiences of the European Church. The position of the Brahmo Somaj, as a church organization, must be to a great extent governed by European influences here.

Then, again, the whole religion of Europe, though it is such a gigantic system, moves round a human centre. The life and death of Christ, his precepts and spirit, set forth with tolerable definiteness and certainty, form a focus into which the various lines and departments of religious life converge, and from which they spread out influences, which go down into the very depths of the national and individual soul. But in India there are so many figures, and so many groups, and the influences coming therefrom are so much distorted and broken through uncongenial mediums, they come so very much more in the shape of sentiments and isolated sayings than a combined system of personal life serving as a model to general society, that the force and integrity of a human centre are all but lost upon the people. There are again local and exclusive centres in the saints and good men who have founded different denominations in Christendom, but all these are governed by the central figure who, according to the European's belief, represents the will of God on earth. He knows definitely

what to aspire after; he has a clear and recognized model after which to fashion his desires and deeds, a personal standard of life and death, of love and work, of blessedness and glory. And a common aspiration and struggling after a common ideal gives a solidarity of sympathy which constitutes another very peculiar feature of European religion. Whether and how far such a principle can be adopted in this country, or in the midst of the Brahmo Somaj, it is for those who are concerned to decide. Our duty ends in pointing out an essential feature of the success, progress, and prosperity of European religion. One other very important side of European faith we shall here allude to. The great subject of the relation between authority and independence has been a problem of centuries. No one can for a moment ignore the wonderful advantages of a settled and recognised authority in all disputed matters of the internal economy and administration of the affairs of a community. In one shape or another such authority is universally represented. On the other hand no one can deny the singular

abuses which have sprung from such centralization of power, and the oppression upon men's consciences and persons which has resulted therefrom. The Protestant Reformation, the child of such conflict, has glorified the principle of religious independence, and in asserting the rights of private judgment have opened in Europe new spheres of life, not only in religion, but in every department of human existence. The liberty of thought, belief, and action, forms the very basis of modern European society. Yet every thoughtful person will see that the independence asserted in the sixteenth century, though so beneficial in every respect, has pulverised the religious society of Europe into disagreeing sects and schools of opinion in which anything like brotherhood and genuine union is out of the question. These disagreements have, in the end, produced a positive reaction in favor of Roman Catholicism among the religiously inclined, which is at present the cause of some alarm. It remains for us to see how far we can adopt this two-fold principle of authority and independence, and by what reconciliation we can

propose to stay the conflict which is now raging. When we have organized ourselves into a community, and are adherents of individual independence, as well as union and rightful obedience, we shall be obliged to take up, if we have not taken up already, the problem of harmonizing the rights of private judgment, with the duty of personal submission. We shall conclude our review of European religious life by just referring to the long and apparently endless conflict between science and faith. There is no question, but that religion has had to modify her position considerably in that part of the world by the ever-advancing strides of scientific progress, and the question has been started now as to whether the faith of Europe can occupy the same ground any longer which it occupied before. With the merits of this controversy in a local and technical sense we have nothing to do. Its general bearing upon our future progress seems to be this: How far is the culture and maturity of the intellect competent to decide the basis and development of man's religious nature? Is not religion

greatly, if not wholly, independent of the bondage of intellect, as philosophy is of the bondage of religious systems? Europe is trying to define the provinces of the intellect, and the religious faculty, respectively, and establish the relations of human nature to both. That the labors of those who have been working in this field have not been complete, we admit; but we must admit at the same time that, in the results of their labours, our prospects are, to some extent, involved, and to the phase of European life which they indicate we cannot afford to be indifferent.

We have thus very imperfectly passed through the chief features of the religious life of men in this country, and in Europe. That some combination of these characteristics in the future religion of India must take place we cannot doubt, and that this combination, when it takes place, must be modified in harmony with the national taste, tendencies, and peculiarities of the Hindu character is equally clear to us. But the combination of the various elements of character, presented by great nations and conti-

nents, is perfectly beyond the power of human agencies to effect. And even if the genius of any single individual or any body of men were able to perform this marvel, it would neither be natural nor abiding. The greatest theories and organizations in matters like this have failed utterly. Let it not be understood by any one therefore that the leaders of the Brahmo Somaj have been making endeavours to effect a theological synthesis, an experiment at saving the millions of this country by the mere efficacy of a spiritual eclecticism. It is not so. The commencement and the completion of the religious destinies of men and nations lie with a Higher Will. The fusion of influences, systems, and conflicting elements of character is effected by the burning fire of inspiration which He alone can kindle in the heart. The silent growth of the spirit of holiness and truth within, by the secret and fostering grace of Heaven, can in the end unite all. We can but watch the signs of the times, pray faithfully, and be true to ourselves, and to our nation. And we can hope and rest in the conviction that through the

merciful guidance of the Father of all truth, and the help and encouragement of good men, the Brahmo Somaj will profit by the teachings and influences of the religious history of India and of Europe.

Will the Brahmo Somaj last?

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WITH the sunlight of fifty-two summers on its forehead, with the struggles, trials, and experiences of more than half a century in its character, the Brahmo Somaj sits to reflect upon its past and future. If, amidst the wreck of religious schools and systems, some spirit, gifted with a prophetic vision into the future, were to contemplate on the rising structure of the Theistic Church in India, and view it in its tendencies, principles, predilections, precedents, ramifications—its harmonies, its discords, its prayers, prophets, preachers, past and present—what would be the verdict which such a spirit might pronounce upon its duration and destiny? Will the Brahmo Somaj last? The spirit of hostile dogmatism has already pronounced that verdict. The Brahmo Somaj will not last. Some soothsayers rest contented with anticipating its fall. Some already observe its decline. Others not only foretell its death, but bury it alive, and write gratuitous epitaphs

over its grave. The charges upon which such extensive condemnation is based, and the Brahmo Somaj is sentenced, slaughtered, and posthumous inscriptions written upon it, are various, heavy, though somewhat conflicting. In the first place, it is accused of lapsing into Hinduism. In the second place, it is detected in the act of merging into Christianity. In the third place, it is sublimating into rationalism and scepticism. In the fourth place, it is seen to be vegetating in the midst of superstition and man-worship, ritualism and symbolism. In the fifth place, it is found raging and foaming with social destructiveness and pride of work. And, lastly, it is seen attenuating into mysticism and inactivity. We say, therefore, that the charges against the Brahmo Somaj are very serious indeed, but *rather* conflicting! If we were to take up and confute these charges one by one, we should sink under the task, nor could any one listen with patience. Therefore, leaving the accusations as they are, or rather leaving them to confute each other, we proceed to consider our subject from other points of view. But before

this is done, one word is necessary. Are the accusations really defamatory, or are they compliments in disguise? To our mind, there is a strange and involuntary compliment involved in the condemnation which our adversaries mean to be fatal. Let us see how. In the provinces of the Panjaub and Scinde, in fact in all provinces which lie intermediate between Hindu and Mahomedan populations, there is a peculiar custom of sharing religious sentiments, religious usages, and saints, in common. So that Pirs and Fakeers, fasts and festivals, are honored and observed alike by Hindus and Mahomedans. Singularly enough, Rajah Ram Mohun Roy, our founder and patriarch, has come to share this universal recognition among his own countrymen, as well as among the people of other countries. It is a notorious fact that the Hindus claim him as an orthodox Vedantist, the Mahomedans as a very sound Moulvi, and the Christians point the finger at him as the first Brahmin-Hindu converted to Christianity. His enemies have, therefore, condemned him as a

sort of universal pervert to everything that was heterodox, and therefore wrong in thought and deed. And his friends have, on the other hand, congratulated him as a sort of universal receptacle of everything that was good and great in every form of doctrine and faith. If this be the case with the founder, is it at all surprising that the institution which he founded should be faithful to him in its character, that it should bear testimony in its life to the universality of its ideal—that, in the catholicity of its doctrines and practices, it should be accused of Hinduism by Christians, and of Christianity by Hindus, and of nameless other transgressions by nameless other classes of men who lack in largeness of faith and breadth of understanding? Yes, it does, verily, bear within itself the essential principles of Hinduism and Christianity, of rationalism and faith, of mysticism, ritualism and practical utility, of science and philosophy,—in short, the substance and the soul of everything that is wise, holy, and good in man's thought, faith, and life. But let me warn you that, if there be an unconscious com-

pliment in the condemnation, there is also a secret danger in the eulogy. The great reproach and source of weakness in Eclecticism, as an independent school of philosophy, is that it has no backbone and integrity of its own, but, like the beggar's garb, is made up of the patchwork of opinions and doctrines borrowed from every system, held together by the perverse tenacity of a versatile and imitative age. That this patchwork falls to pieces and loses its existence as soon as its supple and susceptible authors move out to organic life from the arena of thought, or lose the power of adaptation to their environment. And their eclecticism is thus absorbed into other prevailing modes of thought. If this be so with philosophy, must it not be so with religion also? Must not the spiritual eclecticism of the Theistic Church be absorbed into the profounder vitality of the other churches and communities that surround it? Will not the Brahmo Somaj die the death of absorption? Will not the dark vortex of Hinduism suck it up? Will not Christianity devour it, and digest

it, as it has devoured many other schools of philosophy and faith? Look at the history of the Nanakpanthis, of the Kabiris, of the Jains, of the Satnamis. All these sects did at one time profess strict heterodoxy, and protest against the errors of idol-worship. Yet what are they at the present moment, but willing ingredients in the great mass of Hindu polytheism, the faithless followers of an iconoclastic creed? They have been absorbed by the powerful influences of a dominant national religion. And what will save the Brahmo Somaj from sharing their fate? On the other hand, there is another kind of death which is brought upon a rising school of religion by the spirit of isolation. When a new and growing faith has to struggle for its existence against the organized forces of older and stronger systems of religion, it often happens that, though at first the former appears triumphant, yet in the long run it is driven to the wall by the latter. The sympathies of large communities of men are eminently conservative. And any attempts at radical change of popular

sentiment and practice must sooner or later be repudiated by the slowly acting instincts of the population. And this isolation from popular sympathy must end in the downfall or deportation of the new ambitious reform. Contemplate on the history of Buddhism. Even during the lifetime of Sakya Muni it obtained thousands of converts. And not long after his death the Buddhistic banner floated over the whole land even from Burma to Khyber, and from Thibet to Ceylon. But in its long drawn contests with Hinduism the victorious faith of Asoka succumbed before the steady efforts of the descendants of the Vedic Brahmins, and Buddhism was swept beyond the seas. Buddhism died the death of isolation. Behold again the fate of the Albigenses. For centuries these heroic men of faith fought against the mighty influences of the Roman Pontiffs, and the dreadful anathemas of the dominant Church. From province to province it spread, in Spain and France and Switzerland it was supported by the arms and treasures of great nobles and great peoples. It had well-

nigh done with the Papal power what the Buddhist had done with the power of the Brahmins. But nothing saved the Albigenses in the end. Isolated from the sympathies of Christendom, invaded by the Pope in every direction, they at last were doomed to a dreadful death, their noble operations were blotted out from the face of the history of European reform, and their example was held as a dark warning to every reformer who wanted to defy the mighty powers of popular sympathy. The Albigenses, too, died the death of isolation. If the Brahmo Somaj should be so unwise as to repeat the errors of the Buddhists and the Albigenses, and if we dare to violate the national tendencies, sympathies, and precedents of our great country in any scheme of religious reform, let us be warned in time, their fate shall be the fate of the Brahmo Somaj. There is danger either way then. There is the danger of death by absorption on the one hand, and on the other hand there is the danger of death by isolation. The vessel of the Brahmo Somaj will have to be

steered through the midst of these two rocks, on either of which, if carelessly led, it may make a lamentable shipwreck. Which of these two deaths will the Brahmo Somaj die, or will the Brahmo Somaj last?

But before we proceed further one word is necessary to point out the distinction that must be said between the ordinary meaning attached to Eclecticism, and the meaning which the Brahmo Somaj attaches to that word. It is the custom of critics to point out that Eclecticism has no definite truth or system. That it consists of shreds and patches from all systems and schools gathered by the ingenuity of men who have no faith in any particular revelation of truth. Eclecticism has not been recognized as a philosophy, and it can be far less recognized as a religion. We cannot deny that this charge has a foundation of truth; but we wish at the same time to observe most distinctly that this is not the sense in which the Brahmo Somaj holds its Eclecticism. We mean not the *collection* of truth, but the *unification* of truth. We believe in the *oneness* of

all truth. And this unity is not a philosophical *attempt*, but a spiritual *fact*. To us the leading principles of all religions form *one* Ideal, to realize which in our individual lives we strain all the powers of our body and mind. To us the great prophets of all the world form *one* hierarchy to do homage to whom is the great ambition of our existence. To us the leading disciplines and sacraments of all religions form one great method of spiritual culture which we must adopt. To us the varying peculiarities of the devotions of all religious bodies form one great school of devotions through which our souls must commune with God. And hence the unity of our Ideal includes all the ideals of the world. It is the harmony of scriptures. The unity of prophets is to us the family of God, the only heaven to which we aspire. It is the harmony of prophets. The unity of disciplines and sacraments has led in our church to Hom, Baptism, Dandadnaran, and the adoption of rice and water for bread and wine. The unity of devotions has led to the harmony of Yoga,

Bhakti, Gyan, and Shaba, or communion, love, wisdom, and work. This *unity* is the eclecticism of the Brahmo Somaj.

The great law of evolution has established the principle of the survival of the fittest. That universal struggle for existence pertains to religion, quite as well as to every other form of human speculation. What has been said before may lead us to fear that in the contest for victory between the Brahmo Somaj and other churches, the more powerful systems of faith will crush out the life of our religion. But what is the right interpretation of the law of survival? Nature combines those varieties by natural selection, accumulates and assimilates the varieties of individual objects, and preserves them in higher forms of being. In plants, in animals, and in human beings, the distinguishing varieties of individual members and species are added together, united, developed, and preserved, in a higher and fitter order of objects and species. Let us apply this law to the case of the Brahmo Somaj. Our church is distinctively known from other

churches by the relations which it establishes with the latter. The Brahmo Somaj most heedfully observes the peculiarities of other systems of faith, and accepts every one of those peculiarities, accumulates them, assimilates them with its own life, and preserves them in the midst of its own being. Thus the accumulated varieties of other churches perpetually conduce to its vitality and growth, and raise it continually to higher planes of moral and spiritual existence. Contrast with it the position of other churches, each of which sets up a standard of positive hostility against the rest, fights perpetual battles on the ground of mutual differences in ideal, and converts varieties of religious development into endless sources of mutual weakness and death. That law of survival, then, which in their case must operate towards a mutual extermination of varying ideals and developments, and tend towards throwing a universal discredit upon the character of religious dogmatism, operates in the case of the Brahmo Somaj towards adding force to force, and development

to development, and ends in the conservation of what is best and highest in all religions in the form of a Universal Church. Every force is described by scientific men as indestructible. Forces are internally convertible, and may be simplified, added, and consolidated, but they can never be destroyed. And if this be so in respect of material forces can it be otherwise in the case of moral and spiritual forces? The great law of outward, as well as inner nature is the conservation of forces. And that religion which recognises, as its essential principle, the accumulation of these indestructible moral and spiritual forces, and identifies its growth and existence with them, is eminently true to the highest nature in all things, and is not liable to that decay and death that set their seal upon other institutions. So long as these great forces continue and multiply, so long that church which embodies them and invests them with its own being must continue and grow. The law of survival, therefore, instead of weakening the life of the Brahmo Somaj, adds its highest testimony to the perpetual

existence and progress of that institution. If we had remained isolated from them, they could have done us harm; but we join our spirit to theirs, we give and court sympathy, and isolation from others in work and sentiment does not belong to us. If we had been indifferent to their strong points, they could have overpowered us; when we see those strong points, and adopt them, and assimilate them, we absorb *them* instead of their absorbing us. All strong religions will confer upon the Brahmo Somaj their strength.

You have been hearing in these days of the comparative method, as applied to different pursuits of thought. And along with other studies, the study of comparative theology has been recognised as a field for the exercise of some of the finest intellects of our times. These thinkers place in juxtaposition the merits of contending systems of faith and differing schools of theology, and try to find out the common principles and the universal beliefs of mankind, both ancient and modern. The study of comparative theology is older than you sup-

pose. It has begun not with a Max Muller, or a Johnson, or a Frothingham, but began three hundred years ago with a Mahomedan sovereign, *viz.*, the great Akbar. Every Jumarat evening in the Imperial Palace of Delhi, he called the representatives of Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Mahomedanism, and Jesuitism, and devoutly heard from each the highest tenets of his respective creed. And then, gathering these fragmentary truths, he tried to construct for his own guidance, and the guidance of his subjects, a large and universal faith which did no injustice to any existing system, but owned its indebtedness to all. August Comte, though no believer in God, strangely aspired after the formation of what he called the Positive Church by recognising the prophets of every school of philosophy. His intellectual hierarchy formed a combination of the representatives of many schools and systems. So you perceive in unexpected quarters, and among men having no evident or natural connection, there has been a very clear effort and aspiration towards a higher harmony and deeper unity in

human principles and beliefs. The genius of comparative theology has been hovering over the religious interests of mankind for many centuries together. But the problem which Akbar, Comte, and Max Muller have attemped to solve intellectually and in a theoretic manner, the Brahmo Somaj attempts to solve in a spiritual and practical manner. They have tried to argue out the correspondence of human beliefs and ideas into a system of philosophy; we have tried to combine the spirit of every religion in faith, worship, ritual, and spiritual discipline into a New Religion. They have tried to record the merits of rival churches and systems; we have tried to *live* the life of every religious dispensation in our ordinances, services, meditations, festivals, and personal devotions, and organize ourselves into a New Church. They have wished for an intellectual hierarchy of sages and thinkers to rule the world of thought; we have discovered a spiritual hierarchy, a mighty communion of saints, an unbroken order of prophets, both national and foreign, a veritable

Kingdom of Heaven, to give us light and guidance, hope and consolation, in our every-day efforts after finding God. The harmony of all religious dispensations, the glorious concord of all prophets and all the chosen children of God, the Divine spirit breathing through the scriptures and faith of every nation, forms our ideal of spiritual life here and hereafter. Long before the phrase "Comparative Theology" reached our ears, we had begun to solve the problem of a universal religion, and we had longed to hear the silent harmony of systems. And now that comparative theology promises to be an effective ally in our struggles to realize the great future of the world, we welcome its aid and value its co-operation. But our real endeavours lie in another sphere. Ours is a spiritual, progressive, and practical solution of the question to which the comparative theologians have addressed themselves in intellect. Let us faithfully do our part of the work, as they are doing theirs, and let us be free from fear and misgiving of every kind. So long as the longing for intel-

lectual, moral, and spiritual harmony, which just now the world presents, shall last; so long as the present disposition of the enlightened among mankind to do honor and justice to the great and good in every land shall grow and last; so long as the universality of truth and the fatherhood of God shall continue to be the faith of the most advanced of our species, so long the Brahmo Somaj shall last and grow. For the Brahmo Somaj shares in the problems, in the struggles, in the growths, and in the harmonies of all mankind. And the life and growth of mankind, therefore, shall be its life and law of progress.

The contrast between the present and past of the great religions of the world is very striking. The present condition of almost every church offers us a spectacle of formalism, worldliness, dogmatism, and pride of intellect. There is rivalry, there is selfishness, there is mutual hatred. Brotherly love has given way to unforgiving sectarianism. There is little enthusiasm for the good of humanity. The prophet's tongue is hushed. The fire of inspiration is

quenched at the altar of the world's worship. The vision of unearthly realities is taken away. The harmony of the celestial spheres is no longer heard in the world. The unerring direction of the Divine hand has ceased to be felt. And in the place of all these there is perpetual degeneracy, endless quarrel, and unspeakable phariseeism. What will the Church of the Future borrow from these prospects, and wherewith will the Brahmo Somaj be furnished in its mission of peace? Therefore from such a scene of dust and glare let us retire into the archaic gloom of the apostolic ages. Let us visit the regions of the holy past, the twilight of time amidst which rose the sun of religion in the East, more than once, to take away the darkness of the world. Kindle the devotion of hymnal harmony at the Vedic altar. Milk out the mystic *Onkar* from the triple Vedas. Chant in solemn notes the profound utterances of the *Upanishads* in the darkness of our ancient forests and mountain caverns. Let us go to the source of Hinduism, of our national faith and philosophy, and thence let

us draw the force and fountain of religious life. It is there that Hinduism has to teach us great teachings. Walk with Zoroaster on the mountain tops of Persia, and mark the distinctions in the faith of the different branches of the great Aryan family. Watch the great Buddha sitting under the widespread Aswatha tree at Gaya, merged in marvellous *samadhi*, and in the *nirvana* of all carnal desires, his face full of unspeakable rest Drink at the streams of *Yoga* and *bhakti* in the Puranic regions of the Gita and Bhagvata. Sit at the feet of Narada and Mahadeva, the chief of Yogis. Associate with Nanak and Chitanya, and let them saturate your soul with the nectar of sweet devotion. Or cross over the seas and mountains, travel beyond the centuries to the regions of Socraitic self-knowledge, and Platonic idealism. Retire into the fiery scenes of Hebrew faith and prophecy. Listen to the glorious Mosaic commandments, to the gushing strains of David, to the fiery denunciations of Isaiah. And stand by the sweet prophet of Nazareth, the prince of peace, and listen from him to the everlasting

secrets of the Father's mansions. Yes; from these and the like sources, acquire the immortal spirit and principles of every religion; gather and garner the eternal verities on which the church of the future has to be built. But let us all be warned against selfish and sectarian leanings; against the distortion and misrepresentation of facts; against partiality to one system of religion at the expense of another; against the evil of daring injustice to that God of truth from whom all dispensations ever come. He holds in his hands the eternal balance of realities. And if loyalty to Him means the victory of your cause, strict loyalty to the truths of all religions must form the preliminary duty which you owe to the Father of all truth. Yet it is necessary to remember that the great law of adoption of the primitive realities of human religions carries with it attendant disadvantages. Because in early times, as well as now, human nature often mixes its own alloy with Divine realities. And in all scriptures, and in all archaic institutions, there has always been a

certain deposit of error and fancy. It is the mission of the Brahmo Somaj to effect the purification of the great doctrines of religions, especially the religions of India and Europe, that is to say Hinduism and Christianity. Can the Brahmo Somaj give us Vedic faith and inspiration without the absurdities of nature-worship? Can the Brahmo Somaj offer unto us Buddhistic meditativeness, spiritual absorption, and austere morality without vain intellectualities and needless self-immolation? Can the Brahmo Somaj point out to us the sublimities, the spiritual union, and self-denials of our national *Yoga* without its pantheism and physical monstrosities? Can we, indeed, find in the Brahmo Somaj the tenderness, the vividness, the sweetness, the nameless heavenliness of the genuine Vaishnava's *Bhakti* without its idolatries, superstitions, and ethical absurdities? Is the Brahmo Somaj destined to give us the fire and enthusiasm of Islam without its fury and moral misconceptions? Above all, is the Brahmo Somaj competent to take us to the glorious kingdom of Christ, and steer the vessel

of our faith clear from the hundred unfortunate sectarianisms with which Christians have made that kingdom well nigh inaccessible to the aspiring world? If the Brahmo Somaj can do all this, or even half of this, it shall last. And its progressive life shall be the life and spirit of unborn generations. But what will help us to separate error from truth? What will enlighten our understanding and aid our powers of investigation? What will harmonize our faith to the laws and limits of human nature? We must be true to the exact philosophy of the age. We must invoke science to hold her torch before our uncertain steps and give us the light which she alone can in the mysterious recesses of the spirit land. There have been ere now religions with grand ideals and prophetic faith. But because they dared to transcend the laws of nature, both inward and outward, and hurled defiance before the genius of philosophy and exactitude, because they contemned and fought with the Divine spirit of scientific wisdom, great though they were, they fell, and their names are now remembered with the dead.

Take warning then from their case, and be devoutly faithful to sound philosophy and thought. If the Brahmo Somaj can solve the great problem of conflict between philosophy and faith, it will have amply earned the blessing of God and man towards the acquirement of endless life and prosperity.

Yet let us take assurance that the entire existence of the Brahmo Somaj does not stand upon the adoption, accumulation, and assimilation of the varieties of other systems of faith. But the Brahmo Somaj has an independent existence of its own, founded upon a development of the spiritual life of the nation. The Brahmo Somaj has a simple Theistic life founded upon the two universal principles of love to God, and love to man. Like the Eternal City it is established upon the seven everlasting rocks. The first of these is the rock of devotion and inspiration. It has been said before that the destiny of the Brahmo Somaj is to rekindle the fire of direct communion with the living Spirit of God at the altar of daily worship. Let us say now that unless the Brahmo Somaj fulfils

this destiny, it has no occasion to live. Providence permits no superfluity in the economy of the world. If routine worship and empty dogmatism constituted all the life of your movement, your place in the world might be more worthily taken by others. If a false and poor pride of intellect characterized and exhausted all your teachings, as it does the teachings of so many other sects, these would leave you no apology for a separate life. But your mission is higher. In prayerfulness, in meditativeness, in depth of devotional fervour, in union with the soul of God, in inward fire and enthusiasm, faith in the inward vision of unseen realities, in the awaking of the tongue of silent prophecy, in the rekindling of the fire of lost inspiration, you are to set an example to all mankind in the present age. Your Church, therefore, must be built upon the rock of evergrowing devotion. Beware, however, of the worship of mere intellect and sentiment. The rock of character also must form the basis of the Brahmo Somaj. Brahmos have been long known to their countrymen as men of very good character. Morality has

been the distinguishing feature of our church. This purity of character must not only be cultivated further, but it should be made a real tower of strength to the whole movement. That which is wrong and vile has a dreadful tendency to fasten its roots upon the institutions of these days. It is, therefore, the more necessary that we should strengthen and sanctify our character, and for ever protect the Brahmo Somaj from the frequent reproach of moral laxity that belongs to so many other religions of Hindu origin. The latter history of the Brahmo Somaj gives us additional stimulus in this direction. The third rock on which the Brahmo Somaj is established is faith. The spirit world and its realities, the spirit God and His inscrutable purposes, are to be realized by the vision of faith only. The sight of faith beholds the revelations which are sealed to the carnal intellect. The Brahmo Somaj lives and shall live by faith only. The Brahmo Somaj shall work impossibilities by faith only. The Brahmo Somaj shall bring the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth by faith only. The Brahmo Somaj

shall say things unsaid before through the tongue of faith. This faith is opposed to self-will and self-sufficiency. It is opposed to worldliness and double-dealing of every kind. This faith is beyond the region of intellect and of carnal speculations. This faith supplies the wings wherewith the soul flies up to God in heaven. Standing upon the rock of faith, the Brahmo Somaj shall see the secret kingdoms of truth in this world and beyond. The fourth rock is the rock of good work and service unto the world. The Brahmo Somaj has ever been active in all occupations that tend to the progress and welfare of humanity. The counterpart of its devotion has ever been the doing of God's will. In all manner of reform it has been always busy. To it inactivity has been a sin, and idleness a moral guilt. Good work has been the crown of its prayerfulness, and good work has been the test of its faith. As it grows, its good work shall grow. And its services shall multiply. Serving the world it shall be rewarded with the sympathies of all men, and shall be raised to higher levels

of practical life. Upon the rock of human brotherhood and love the Brahmo Somaj takes its stand. Unity, both moral and spiritual, it shall promote. It has tried and shall ever try to combine sects and communities. Its mission shall be to drive away discord and unbrotherliness. How can disunion and wrangling then exist in its midst? A house, divided against itself, cannot stand. And if among us, Brahmos, discord, persecution, self-will and unforgiveness be allowed to continue, how will your cause prevail? Beware of the danger of internal discord. Beware of the danger of mutual hatred, of the mortal sin of pride that repels men, and do you perpetuate your church on the everlasting rock of love. The prophets and scriptures of all nations form the sixth stone of our foundation. All the great men and all the revelations of the world bear upon their shoulders the rising structure of the Brahmo Church. All religions confirm our religion. All saints and martyrs bear testimony to our faith. We have to recognize them all, and cite their authority. Seventhly and lastly, as a new

Divine Dispensation the Brahmo Somaj appears before the world. The rock of God's Revelation forms the mightiest stronghold of the Theistic Church. The eternal God hath appointed the Brahmo Somaj to carry out through its agency his secret and infinite purposes. What those purposes are time alone shall reveal. That which the Brahmo Somaj has accomplished is exceedingly little in comparison to what it is destined to do. So long, therefore, as God lasts, the Brahmo Somaj shall last. Long after the bricks and stones of this earthly abode have crumbled away in their native dust, long after the edifice of our Mandir is levelled to the ground from which it raised its head, long after our names are blotted out from the records of the living, long after the present generation has been buried in oblivion, the Brahmo Somaj shall continue to live and last, and spread its blessings over the children of men.

A Summary of the Beliefs of the Brahmo Somaj.

THE Brahmo Somaj believes that God is, that he is a Spirit, and that he is One without a second.

That God is a personal and living God, with the infinite attributes of truth, wisdom, love, holiness, power, glory, and peace.

That God is present in us, and with us. He directs all the functions of our body and mind according to fixed laws. He watches over all our thoughts and actions. His spirit surrounds us, and fills us, and is the cause and centre of all physical and mental forces.

That God is present in all the aspects and laws of nature, and nothing that takes place, takes place without His will and power.

That as God's general providence superintends over the affairs of all mankind and the world at large, so His special providence presides over the circumstances and destinies of individual men, and leads them through mysterious ways from evil to good.

That there is a double nature in man, namely, his body and his spirit. His body is perishable, but his soul is immortal.

That the immortality of the soul means eternal progress in goodness and godliness.

That without faith in a future existence, religion is impossible.

That every man is responsible for his deeds and thoughts.

That inward as well as outward sin brings its own punishment both in this life and in the life to come. The punishment of sin is the degeneracy and anguish of mind, and sometimes bodily afflictions also which produce the anguish of mind.

That righteousness brings its reward of internal peace both here and hereafter.

That sin is the wilful violation of God's laws, both material, moral, and spiritual.

That righteousness is conscious and wilful obedience rendered unto God in the trials, occupations, and temptations of life.

That there is neither a material heaven nor a material hell; but that heaven and hell are

the states and relations of a man's being, according to the merits of his life, both here and hereafter.

That there is a spiritual relationship and future union of souls in heaven.

The Brahmo Somaj believes in the existence and divine authority of conscience, which lays down for man the dictates and prohibitions of God.

That the foundation of all religion is laid on the spiritual instincts of man which are imbedded in the nature of the soul.

That faith is the organ through which the perception of spiritual realities is possible, and prayer is the law without which spiritual progress is impossible.

The Brahmo Somaj believes in the harmonious mission of prophets and great religious teachers, through the lustre and power of whose teachings and examples we discern what is salvation and spiritual life.

The Brahmo Somaj believes Jesus Christ to be the chief of all prophets and teachers.

The Brahmo Somaj believes in the harmony

of all scriptures, and in the efficacy of studying them, but believes in the special efficacy of studying the Bible and the Hindu scriptures.

That, according to the needs and tendencies of mankind, at different times, and in different countries, the providence of God introduces, and carries out particular dispensations or phases of religion, with the object of delivering nations and individuals from sin and misery, and of enlightening them with truth, holiness, and peace.

The Brahmo Somaj in its progressive developments in principle as well as in life, constitutes such a dispensation, and it therefore calls itself the New Dispensation.

The Brahmo Somaj believes Theism to be the dispensation of the age. It will include all previous dispensations. It will harmonize with every form of scientific and philosophical truth. The forms and the modes of the development of Theism will differ in different countries and communities; but its spirit will be the same everywhere. And the Brahmo Somaj fully believes that Theism will be the religion of the future.

The Brahmo Somaj believes in the inspiration and truth-teaching power of its apostles. This inspiration is more intense in some men and less intense in others.

The Brahmo Somaj believes that the gift of inspiration is natural and universal. That men have been inspired and commanded by God to do great things in the past, and men can be also inspired at the present time as well as in the future. But that men commissioned to carry out the special purposes of God, are gifted with special inspiration for those purposes.

The Brahmo Somaj believes the position and mission of women in the Theistic church to be very high, and unless and until men have learnt thoroughly to purify their hearts in regard to women, and to honor them, Theism will not take root in this land.

The Brahmo Somaj believes in the solemn duty of the communion of the spirit of man with the spirit of God. It does not believe in mediation, but in an immediate spiritual vision of the perfections of God. This is Worship.

The Brahmo Somaj believes in the duty of communion with the spirits of holy men, both living and departed. This is Brotherhood.

The Brahmo Somaj believes in the duty and utmost efficacy of prayer for spiritual and not for material benefits.

The Brahmo Somaj believes in the great duty of public and joint worship.

The Brahmo Somaj believes that the brotherhood of men enjoins the great duty of sincerely loving and doing service to each other, both material, moral, and spiritual.

The Brahmo Somaj believes religion includes every manner of good work, and every description of social reform. But it does not believe in any work, or any reform, the spirit of which is not strictly and faithfully subordinated to religion.

The Brahmo Somaj believes in the harmony of different orders of religious culture, such as meditation, prayer, good work, asceticism, and religious wisdom.

The Brahmo Somaj believes in the utmost sanctity of domestic life. It holds the fidelity

of attachment and conduct between husband and wife to be one of the holiest sacraments of human life. It believes every household duty should be performed in the spirit of religion. Because it believes without religion no household can be happy or pure.

The Brahmo Somaj believes it to be a duty to honor the professors of all religions, and only to beware of the hypocrite and evil-doer.

The Brahmo Somaj believes in the sacred and solemn duty of propagating its own faith by missionary agencies, and converting men to its own religion.

The Brahmo Somaj believes in the sacred duty of preserving, and cherishing, and cleansing this material body with which God has clothed man's soul so long as life remains. But it also believes in suffering hardship and moral discipline which subdue and control the carnal instincts of human nature.

The Brahmo Somaj believes in the sacred and supreme duty of cultivating and encouraging the independence of thought, will, and convictions. Everything that tends to enslave man's nature

is an evil. It also believes in the great duty of subordinating individual opinions, habits, and inclinations to the general welfare of the community.

The Brahmo Somaj believes in the ultimate triumph of good over every form of evil, of truth over every form of falsehood, and of the true faith over every form of unbelief.

PART II.

The Bhakti or Devotional Movement in the Brahmo Somaj.

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THE life and character of the Brahmo Somaj have been determined almost wholly by its devotions. The development of religious emotions in the Brahmo Somaj could form a subject by itself. The devotional fervour of the movement forms the very life of its leaders, and has extended its power and spirit into our hearts and households which no doctrinal preaching, or theological perfection, could ever attain. In the early years of Rajah Ram Mohun Roy's church, there was scarcely any *devotion* in it. Passages from the shastras were chanted in the Somaj. Besides this the little that passed by the name of devotions was mainly composed of certain hymns, whose author was the Rajah himself. These set forth the vanity of the world, and exhorted men to devote their minds to God. Ram Mohun Roy's strong ratiocinative mind, restless under the impulse of removing idolatry and polytheism from the land, found little leisure or inclination to retire into

the calm undisturbed depths of lengthened devotional exercises. So the most successful attempt he ever made in this line was the composition of simple popular hymns, greatly improved by the subsequent progress of the Brahmo Somaj. We translate below a specimen of Rajah Ram Mohun Roy's hymns :—

Remember the last fearful day,
Others will speak, but thou shalt be silent;
Much care can preserve a grass, or a log of wood,
But no care can keep thy body from decay ;
Therefore know the truth, leave vanity and worldliness,
Be resigned in spirit, and contemplate on the Great God.

The Rajah's chief hymn was perhaps that composed by him in England, describing how he everywhere felt at home amidst the works of the Creator.

Devendra Nath Tagore's warm emotional nature, when he joined the Brahmo Somaj, naturally turned the course of its thought, and gradually changed its form of service. The first devotional revival in the Brahmo Somaj may properly be said to have taken place when Devendra Nath joined it about the year 1839. He attracted a number of intelligent and educated men, and bound them into a theological

society, called the *Tatwabodbini Sava*, which intended to reform both the creed and the liturgy of the Brahmo Somaj. A learned monthly journal was started in the vernacular. The object which Devendra Nath had evidently in view was to preserve the Hindu ideal of the Rajah, but impart to it an intensely emotional, devotional, theological character. In this he partly succeeded. The venerable Brahmin Ram Chundra Vidyabagis, who then presided over the services of the Somaj, was pious and devont. And Devendra Nath never mentions him but with tender and cordial memory. In the new covenant of membership established about the year 1843, every Brahmo solemnly bound himself to cultivate the habit of daily prayer. But in the society (*Tatwabodbini Sava*) formed by Devendra Nath for the direction of the Brahmo Somaj, there was unhappily a powerful anti-devotional tendency with which our honored friend fought for a long time. True, he had gathered the men, but it is also true he had no control over them. His was the money, his was the prestige, his was the piety, but the power to rule was

in a great measure taken from him. The will of the majority practically guided the movement. And to such absurd lengths was this rule of the majority carried, that happening to discuss certain theological difficulties on one occasion, they decided the great subject of the goodness of the Deity by *a show of hands!* Perhaps it was only the casting vote of the chairman that saved the reputation of the Infinite. Being however numerically in the minority, and lacking in resources which could cope with the strong intellectual rivalry on the other side, Devendra Nath was often defeated, and in a mood of despair retired to the Himalayas in 1855. After three years of solitary contemplation and prayer, amidst the eternal heights and snows of the mountains, sacred to all that is glorious and profound in Hindu tradition, he returned to Calcutta, refreshed, invigorated, and joyous in spirit. His chief opponents in the meanwhile had, by unforeseen circumstances, left the scene one after another. Eshwar Chunder Vidyasagar had long ago resigned his place in fit of disgust. Akhai Kumar Dutt was

disabled by an incurable brain-disease. Others had gone away in other ways. So after his return Devendra Nath found it best to abolish the old obnoxious society called *Tatwabodhini Sava.* He was joined by new and youthful colleagues, chief, among whom was Keshub Chunder Sen. During Devendra's absence some improvements, in the order of devotions prescribed before, had been carried out in the weekly service of the Brahmo Somaj; but in want of spirituality in the ministers all life had gone out of those forms. It is doubtful whether in those days even a dozen men could be found who had cultivated the habit of daily devotions. Under such circumstances Devendra Nath Tagore resumed his work. At first he used to offer extempore prayers from the body of the temple during the weekly service. By-and-bye he commenced to preach from the pulpit, and became the chief minister. His sermons were glowing with profound spirituality. The results of these preachings have been embodied in that excellent book known as *Brahma Dhurma Bakhyan,* (Expositions of the

religion of the Brahmos.) The hymns composed at this period by some of his sons were truly sweet and touching. We give below a specimen :—

How much (is) thy mercy,
I will not forget in life,
Day and night I will weave strung around (my) heart.
I will no more lie chained in the love of the world,
I will keep thee in my soul,
Wealth, life, body, mind, I will give thee all.

What immense progress there was in the devotional character of the Brahmo Somaj will be readily found by contrasting the spirit of the two hymns we have translated. For in the Brahmo Somaj, let it always be borne in mind, the hymn is a sure indication of the kind, character, and order of religious advancement. These songs formed a fitting accompaniment to the services and sermons. The congregation multiplied, its character changed from that of an intellectual assembly of protesters to a band of enthusiastic cordial worshippers. And thus the aspect of affairs went continually brightening and promising progress from 1858 to 1861.

This period may be set down as that of the second devotional revival in the Brahmo Somaj. Old and young sat together with glowing hearts

at the feast of weekly worship in the old meeting house at Jorasanko, Devendra's stately, princely, spiritual presence prominent on the marble pulpit. Songs and sermons were every week printed. Lectures were delivered, tracts issued, plans formed. Devendra's family mansion wore the scene of a festival every week, almost every day. In his former associates he had evidently made a mistake of choice. It seemed as if now, in spite of the desparity of age, Devendra had found his ideal co-worker and friend in Keshub. The union was providential in its origin, and marvellous in its results. Thus happily, peacefully, and in continued progress, four years very soon passed away.

In the year 1862 Keshub Chunder Sen was formally installed as minister of the Brahmo Somaj. Devendra's devotions were the overflow of great emotional impulses, stirred by intense absorbed contemplation of the beauties and glories of nature. His utterances were grand, poetic, fervid, archaic, profound as the feelings were which gave rise to them. But they seldom recognised the existence of sins

and miseries in human nature, or the sinner's necessity of salvation. Devendra Nath had never received the advantages of a Christian training. His religious genius is essentially Vedic, Aryan, national, rapturous. The only element of Semitic mysticism which he has imbibed has been from the ecstatic effusions of the Persian poet Hafez. But the characteristic of the Hafezian, or Sufi order of piety is not ethical, but emotional. Hence moral estimates of the merits of the productions of Hafez vary most widely and amazingly. Daily prayer had been a habit with Keshub even long before he had entered the Brahmo Somaj. He prayed untrained, untutored, undirected. He prayed because his artless soul was led into the paths of simple spontaneous appeals to a Merciful Father for protection against sin and falsehood. Keshub's prayers in those days were neither tender, nor eloquent, nor glowing, nor grand as those of his venerated colleague, but they were *real*. They faithfully represented the temptations, follies, wickednesses, longings, and aspirations of our plain poor humanity. Time

and experience have tried the respective merits of the two orders of devotion. The fervour and sweetness of Devendra's spirituality spent themselves on a hard quarrelsome unappreciative world, and drove him in despair to reseek the solitary mountains which are now the home of his old age. Whereas Keshub's solid piety has grown, expanded, deepened, matured, mellowed, and namelessly sweetened under the many trials and sorrows that have passed over his head during the last twenty-five years. The unfortunate rupture in the Brahmo Somaj was a serious crisis to both these men. In the case of Devendra Nath Tagore it marred his devotions, crippled his eloquence, embittered his heart, shook his faith in men and movements, and compelled him to seek safety and peace in permanent seclusion. How it acted on Keshub we must describe below.

For full four years Keshub preached and prayed from the pulpit of the Brahmo Somaj at Jorasanko. He cannot be said to have till then formed his ideals, or foreseen his future. He had thrown himself without reservation into

a mighty sea of influences, moral, social, and spiritual, and allowed himself to be carried on by Providence. A great unuttered ambition was opening up the subterranean fires of the young man's genius. But one thing was plain. Keshub's ambition was very different from Devendra's. Devendra was at best but a liberal Tory working upon fixed lines of aim and idea. Keshub was a youthful Radical striding after vast perspectives of progress whose boundaries were beyond his vision. He fired a band of young men, mostly of his own age, with great enthusiasm and longing for unattained and unknown moral and spiritual excellence. These youths were impulsive beyond discretion, their views were always sanguine, and sometimes extreme. Their energy was unbounded. They gradually formed around Keshub a neucleus of new society, whose power evidently made itself felt through the whole of our little theistic community in those days. And it was the forward spirit of these men that brought about the well-known separation in the Brahmo Somaj in 1866.

But what was there in Devendra and Keshub to produce the rupture? Let us see. The varying ambitions and ideals in the minds of the two leaders, united in the bonds of the heavenliest friendship, did not however fail to produce their necessary mental consequence. Youth and ardour, even under the wholesome constraint of the sincerest personal reverence, lighted and stirred by the true spirit of responded prayerfulness, thirsted after the Infinite in all individual and social activity. Under the protecting wings of Devendra's paternal encouragement, Keshub's progressive and productive efforts knew no bounds. But the sagacious and thoughtful young man could not but mark that there were times and subjects on which his revered friend's mind had long been made up. He honored these prejudices and said little about them. On the other hand the profound wisdom and experience of Devendra Nath, his penetration, insight, and kingly generosity of disposition, yielded an unquestioning confidence in his enthusiastic colleague, who was the cynosure of his eye, and the hope of his heart.

But Devendra felt in the mind of his mind that he could not control his friend. All his submissive, broad, self-forgetful, unworldly affectionateness could not avail him, but he now and then felt an unpleasant hitch when brought to deal with the sharp rugged moral resolutions of the untamed young man. Devendra, impulsive and intensely sensitive, at unguarded moments complained of a sense of solitude. Keshub calm, self-contained, and inured to mental loneliness of every kind, kept his own counsel. This course of mutual toleration and forbearance, which did not diminish, but added picturesqueness and piquancy to their mutual relations, went on for nearly seven years. But the unuttered contrarieties of moral ideals must some day come to an avowed reckoning when circumstances force unexpected emergencies of duty into the conscience, and accomplished conduct sternly demands to be explained. Devendra, deriving his ancestry from the primitive colony of the Brahmins of Kanya Kubja, in all their unnamable sanctity, had always a constitutional partiality for the sacred caste. The pulpit of

the Brahmo Somaj was up to this time uncontaminated by Sudra ministry of any kind. All the Acharyas and Upacharyas had been invariably Brahmins. The rule was first broken in Keshub's favor. On the other hand Keshub, though himself not a Sudra, never abounded in much traditional veneration for any class or order. His genius recognized genius and talent as only worthy of honor; nay he participated sometimes in pleasantries regarding the somnolency and other personal amenities of the somewhat undevotional Brahmin ministers who before him used to occupy the pulpit. He divested not a few of his Brahmin companions of their sacred thread. It cannot be denied his notions on such points were revolutionary. Devendra Nath had strict and highly conservative ideas about the proprieties of Hindu marriage customs. Widow-marriage was to him an abomination, and inter-marriage still worse. Born and bred amidst the immaculate respectabilities of an aristocratic Hindû Zenana, marrying and giving in marriage through extensive agencies, diplomatic negotiations, and prodigious outlays

of money, uninfluenced owing to his social isolation by the new ideas germinating outside his own institution, Devendra felt that these reforms were low, uncanny, unsavory, proletarian, infectious articles, far above which the Brahmo Somaj ought to soar in its azure heights. Keshub, on the other hand, had to deal with the excommunicated, the youthful, the widowed, the unmarried, the unendowed men and women, seeking settlement in faith, life, character, in the relationships of home, sympathy, and society. The demands and appeals of a new generation fell upon him thick and fast waiting for a ready response. He had imbibed new ideas almost with his mother's milk. His nature yearned after those who could not approach Devendra Nath in his exalted dignity, but who looked up to him as their brother and succourer. And hence, though himself bred in a highly aristocratic household, Keshub readily took to the new reforms, though he never made any unnecessary fuss about them. He quietly waited for opportunity, and when that came, he never scrupled to identify himself with radical

marriage reforms. Brahmins divested of sacred thread ascended the Somaj pulpit, widow marriages and intermarriages were celebrated, the first measure of the kind dating from 1862. The unuttered inner divergencies began to pronounce themselves. Devendra was apprehensive, mortified, dubious. Keshub was calm and firm. Elderly and interested persons, who always hovered around Devendra's prosperity, and never approved of the ascendancy of the young interloper, began to deal in their congenial trade of carrying stories. In the struggle between private feeling and official judgment, the feeling lost. Devendra thought it right to take a determined stand. He decided against the reforms. Devendra's misgivings were amply responded to. And thus from a seeming insufficiency of occasion, but sheer psychological necessity, the rupture of these happy relations, took form and shape about the end of the year 1866.

After the secession of the Progressive Brahmos there was great and continued trial to the small band of young men headed by Keshub Chunder Sen. They were fearfully earnest

and sincere, and intensely anxious for spiritual improvement. They were ready to make any sacrifice required for their principles. But their enthusiasm had not yet found an adequate exponent in institution, or doctrine, or high spiritual ideal. A strange sense of desertion overtook them. In the first place their expulsion from the parent Somaj was a sufficient trial and sacrifice. In the second place, though they established the Brahmo Somaj of India in November 1866, very soon after the secession, they had neither a house of worship, nor sympathy, nor resources of any kind to fall back upon. They yearned for great activity, they longed to launch themselves into great undertakings, they soon formed themselves into a missionary organization, left their worldly avocations, invited hardships, but nothing in which they engaged themselves gave abundant occupation to their unfolding, multiplying, immature energies. Then all sorts of rumours were circulated about them, all sorts of suspicions fastened upon them, and they had not much reliance upon each other. But it must be said they

had great faith in God, and confidence in their leader. If we imagine the case of a young man, only half-grown, and half-trained, who, suddenly, without outfit or perparation of any kind, is turned out of his paternal home, and cast amidst a sea of difficulties and sorrows in which he must sink, or shift for himself, we can understand the case of these helpless young men. Their depression was great. The shock upon their body and mind was considerable. Their sorrow was sometimes changed into bitterness, their supplication into complaints and cruel words. They spared neither the parent Somaj, nor each other, nor even sometimes their leader himself, in their impatient struggles for progress. But they were all determined to push forward. Their eagerness lacked the balance of experience and patience. The significance of the whole lesson of tribulation had not yet been interpreted to them. Some of them read the Bible greedily enough, but the Bible was yet a sealed book. Some of them professed great love and faith in Christ. All this did indeed yield glimpses of

light, and brought drops of consolation, but did not heal their deep wounds. The lecture on Jesus Christ was delivered in March. Christian missionaries, not without reason, hoped to make a wholesale conversion of them all. Prophecies and prognostications about their destiny were plentiful. Our hot impatience, and unprocrastinating, iconoclastic progressiveness gave color to every report. But Keshub's ideals were clearing, brightening and shaping. The establishment of the Brahmo Somaj of India gave a marvellous impetus to his whole being. He knew his own mind, kept his own counsel, was calm, sure, and unperturbed by the surrounding clamour. All this took place in 1866. We give below extracts from a private note book in which a review of the year occurs: "Since our rupture with the Brahmo Somaj, we have been led more by enthusiasm than a clear consciousness of our work, condition, or destiny. From the very beginning of 1866 our spiritual trials commenced. We had grand notions of the achievements that our enthusiasm could make. But a false feeling like this could not

last long. One by one we all returned to our hearts to find there nothing but desolation. Then we were vexed with ourselves, and with those who led us; then we suspected we had no mission, no work, that our hearts were rotten. We even doubted whether that was the right course of religion we were following. Our condition was exactly similar to that of the Israelites in the wilderness. But we felt most strongly and vividly for our sins, more so than we did before. For myself I must say I felt that I was a slave to the worst passions of my heart. As to my brethren I often spoke to them on the point, and ascertained their condition was similar to mine. Only they were perhaps not so impetuous as I was. I wrote to Keshub most strongly, and give below one of the letters, and one of the replies I received :—

My Dear Keshub,—You have every right to expect letters from me, though I don't know what good my letters will do you. Here I am in your garden, for your kindly letting me use which I thank you. Wherever I am it is all the same with me. I am really tired

of complaining. I ought to be ashamed of it. But the mouth speaketh out of the fulness of the heart. It seems as if nothing short of utter annihilation or absolute deliverance can serve me. This may be called impatience. Patience in well-doing is good, but patience in evil-doing, is that good? Is impatience *never* better than patience? I cannot have any more patience with this foul wicked self in me. Death, I should say annihilation, is better than it. Patience with whom? I can have patience with myself, that is to say I can calmly continue in my wretched, accursed course of offence as long as I like. God does not crush the head of the brazen rebel with his ready thunder. I can pretend patience, all the while hiding even from myself an unworthy life of sensuality, sloth, and uselessness, with a long face crying to others—Patience, Patience. But what will excuse such shameless folly? I can have patience with myself, but who will have patience with me? Will you wait, will my brethren wait, will life and death wait for me? So much work remaining; so many

duties yet unfulfilled! true life hardly yet begun! But time speeds on—death is near. How can he have patience who is at the point of death? Upon one day's labour there hangs an eternity. Yet still I slumber and wanton away! O Keshub, now or never. Rescue, tell me where, and in what is rescue. With all the work of a life before me I sit unable to move one step. God have mercy upon me a miserable downcast sinner.

Yours affectionately,

CALCUTTA, COLOOTOLA, 8*th June*, 1867.

MY DEAR ——— I have undertaken to reply your letter, but I doubt whether anything I say will satisfy you in the present perturbed state of your mind. You have drawn indeed a sad picture of your struggles and temptations, and it is so vivid and real that it must excite the sympathy of every fellow sinner. To be conscious that the soul is sinking is certainly most terrible and painful, and what aggravates the danger and suffering is disappointment in the search of something to save us. But

know you not that God is infinite in loving-kindness, and saves the worst and most abandoned characters? Have firm faith in his redeeming grace and faint not. You can't deny that grace; you can't deny the saving efficacy of Brahmo Dhurmo; for you yourself say you are "going downwards," and thereby indirectly admit that God and Brahmo Dhurmo did once elevate you to a high position, and kept you there for some time at least. If it is true that you feel now as you never felt before, what are those means which enabled you to feel better in the first few years of your religious life? I would leave you to answer that question yourself. God once helped you up; why then does He not help you now? The only condition on which he showers his gifts is faith or loyal subjection. He will give us all that we need if we would only acknowledge him as our Master, let our sin and wickedness be ever so great. But faith goes out when pride comes in: faith raises the lowest, pride brings down the highest. You may say I can't curb my pride, it is for God to humble

me down to the dust, and then to raise me regenerated by faith and humility. I admit it sometimes so happens that a mere accident, we call it God's interposition, purges the sinner's heart of pride, makes him humble, and reforms him without any great effort on his part. But you must remember the beginning is not the end. It rests with the reformed sinner to strive to sustain the action of God's holy spirit with continued and voluntary activity, constant watchfulness, and care, and struggles. If ever pride should creep into his heart, and estrange it from God, he must voluntarily try to regain what he has voluntarily given up and forfeited. Is not this the case, I ask, with many of us? God did give us out of the fulness of His mercy, but why did we proudly reject His gifts? Surely we must pay the penalty and go through some troubles and trials ere we can regain the lost treasure, and make our hearts once more subject to the influence and inspiration of the Divine Spirit. Some persons begin their religious life with great trouble and difficulty, and when they receive

God's aid they learn to value it and try to secure it as best they may. In our case I say the temptation to undervalue divine help has been very great, and we have more or less yielded to it. What makes the demoralizing effects of pride more serious is the evil effect it produces on the convictions of the mind. Through it the corruption of the heart flows into the brains, and affects the intellect. I fear this evil influence, certain and unavoidable as it is, has begun to manifest itself among us. The convictions we so valued before regarding the efficacy of prayer, good company and counsel, and the special providence of God generally in history, and particularly in the Brahmo Somaj, are, it seems, gliding away; and scepticism, once master of the heart, will speedily effect the consummation of that dreadfulness of demoralization which pride has begotten. I won't write more, it is past 5. Do, my good friend, try, by means of daily prayer, to establish your heart in faith and humility; and one day God will reveal Himself as He never revealed himself

before. Despair is unknown in God's kingdom even to the worst sinner. His mercy is a ladder which reaches the lowest depth of sin and enables the sinner to climb up to the mansions of righteousness and peace.

Yours affectionately,

K. C. SEN.

These strong feelings were shared by all earnest Brahmos of our small band. They indicate to some extent the nature of the raw material which was at the disposal of the new organization. It required no little care, skill, insight, and power of command to shape such material into real lasting fabric. The men were free, bold, honest, energetic, and intelligent, but hasty, unripe, and clamorous. The feelings went gaining in strength, and culminated during Keshub's absence in the Punjab in the beginning of 1867. After his return the existing state of feelings was communicated to him. He was told that, "unless there was a New Dispensation, the Somaj could not be saved; unless there was a new agency

to keep us together, there would be another rupture in the Brahmo Somaj amongst those who had separated themselves from Devendra Babu, and were honored with the name of Progressive Brahmos. And this rupture would be even more serious than what preceded."* From being private, the protests became public. Articles indicative of this feeling appeared in the *Indian Mirror*. All this deeply wounded Keshub. Outwardly he was calm and strong; internally he was agonized, and scarcely knew what to do. He felt that faith in him was beginning gradually to shake. The despair and despondency were great. There was bitter mutual ill-feeling, and the axe was laid at the root of all true brotherly sympathy. A short journey to Barisal was planned in August, during which the state of things here described reached its crisis and culmination. After returning, Keshub, who always prayed alone, suddenly announced the intention of holding daily prayers with

* These words are extracted literally from a private notebook marked January, 1868.

his friends. He gradually instituted a reformed order of divine service, with invocation, adoration, ardent communion, and prayers. This was subsequently elaborated into the present Order of Divine Service in the Brahmo Somaj of India. Hymns expressive of intense repentance and loneliness were composed and sung. These daily prayers, instituted about the month of September 1867, marked an era in the history of the Brahmo Somaj. Keshub's prayers had undergone a strange development during the last eighteen months. The stern, ethical and intellectual utterances thawed into a tenderness of humility, supplication, and trusting dependence which dissolved every heart it touched, into kindred tears. The didactic devotions of the older Jorasanko pulpit were by an unseen process transformed into an all-piercing pathos, an unspeakable sympathy with every form of sin, suffering, and desertion, that made our daily services the veritable Service of Sorrow. But it was sorrow devoid neither of hope nor of light. It was exalting, sanctifying sorrow that melted and brought out the most

precious element in the soul. Another extract from the notebook above referred to is subjoined : "O the divine spirit of his (K.'s) prayers ! I had never heard anything like them before. I went on a tour to the North Western Provinces. During my absence the heavenly element which I discerned in these devotions became more manifest. There was indeed beginning to be a special dispensation * * There was continued prayer, singing, fasting, Dhyan (meditation). I was delighted and sanctified with what I saw. Every day this divine element of faith and love became more and more powerful and effective, till indeed every one of us felt the spring of a new life. It was doubtless the beginning of something great and holy. Through the proper channel, in the Eternal's own good time, amidst surrounding darkness and despair, the good news of God's light came. It descended at first in the spirit of genuine prayer. From being regarded as a dreary duty, as an occasional impulse, prayer was explained and felt to be a deep, abiding, intense necessity, such as could

be only wrung out from the deep-seated wants of a sinful penitent heart." The complainings ceased. The perturbed impartient protests were heard no longer. The seceders were united and felt blessed in one holy fraternity. All feelings were swallowed up in one predominant feeling of love to God and sympathy for man. The time for a third revival in the Brahmo Somaj came. But it was not a revival merely. It was the beginning of a great new movement.

Often did the Brahmos utter and reflect upon that beautiful passage in the Bible: 'His disciples said unto Christ, Lord, teach us to pray.' Why and to whom this was said might now be left in obscurity, though that is extremely important. Be it enough to set down here that they heard as they had never before heard. And humbly believed. Sunday after Sunday, their devotional meetings presented such a scene as angels might visit with pride. The grace of the Heavenly Father, for which they had so long waited and watched, cried and contended, was now near at hand. Very dimly and vaguely at first, more distinctly and

definitely afterwards, this was understood. Continued and sincere repentance, heartfelt dependence, fervent supplication, constant and devout meditation, fasting and vigils, followed. The daily meetings of devotion were largely attended. The hymns uttered forth the most lowly humility, most vivid faith and dependence. We give below a specimen of the hymn of that time :—

Hold, hold thy patience, contain thy tears, have hope, do not despair.
The cry of the sinner will be heard by the Mother, sorrow will not last all thy days.
On the lap of mercy, giving thee rest, the Mother will wash thee in waters of joy,
And console thee with sweet words, therefore cease to mourn.
There is no parallel to His love, His mercy is unbounded,
Depend upon him, and do not be impatient.
Behold how many like thee, who were miserable before,
Have found refuge under the shelter of His feet.
And declared at last his faithfulness with fearless hearts.

These sacred songs were sung in choral rapture, giving rise to that new hymnal service of the Brahmos called by the name of Brahmo Sankirtan. Now, for the first time in connection with the Brahmo Somaj, was witnessed the rare

spectacle of sinful men, *bitterly* conscious of their sins, praying and listening with living sincerity for their souls' salvation. Could such prayer and such precepts fail? New strength, new hopes, and joys, new harmony and light were obtained from their new method of spiritual exercise. The past was greatly explained, the present was received with thanksgiving, the future was eagerly anticipated. But this could not stop here. As darkness had increased before, so light increased now, and with that light, truth, strength, and joy. Not that the Brahmos experienced all on a sudden the utter dissolution of all their difficulties. On the contrary their difficulties became at times tenfold more intense, and their sorrows returned with increased poignance. But they had at last, by the incomparable mercy of Providence, begun to find the way and the life, by seeking, asking, and knocking at the gate of heaven. Their devotions now absorbed the principal part of their energies. They learned to rejoice. And rejoice indeed they did, though it was with weeping eyes. They rejoiced not at anything which

their own hearts could boast of, but gratefully in the name and mercy of Him who had thought them worthy of His grace. They rejoiced with the healthy sorrow of the way-worn prodigal who, ragged in misery, sore with disease and hunger, sought at last with bleeding feet his Father's door and found acceptance. With gratitude and lowliness of spirit did they rejoice, constantly praying all day without food or drink, singing their Merciful Father's praise. And those who bitterly wept erewhile, who were so full of darkness, unholiness, and untruth, that hope had nearly left their hearts ; if such forlorn sinners find the direct Dispensation of God to give them salvation and peace, have they not cause for grateful rejoicing ? From this originated the festival of the Brahmo Somaj known as *Brahmotsub*, which literally means "Rejoicing in the Lord."

Thus began and grew the great devotional or Bhakti movement in the Brahmo Somaj of India. It took the form of devotional festivals, called *Brahmotsub*, which lasted from six

in the morning to ten in the night. There were repeated services, *Sankirtans*, street processions, and enthusiastic choruses of popular hymns, expositions of scriptural texts, sermons, conversations, and long intervals of silent meditation, during which the hundreds who formed the congregation sat silent with closed eyes. The first of these festivals or *Brahmotsub* took place in November 1867. Its effect was great. Very hard-hearted men became tender like children. Many bad characters were reclaimed, and turned to saintly lives. Not a few atheists and sceptics were converted. The whole Brahmo Somaj rang with the fame of these festivals. In the next year, 1868, these devotional revivals were held in Monghyr, a picturesque town in Behar, whither Keshub had retired with his family for a change of air. The spirit of the movement grew there to such an extent, and attracted such vast numbers of men that a considerable agitation resulted from it afterwards. The brethren were not only enthusiastic in their love and lowliness to their Father in heaven,

but also to each other, and especially to their minister. These expressions of humility, affection, and obedience were represented by some as "man worship." A number of disaffected Brahmos, some inimical Christian missionaries, and scandal-mongers generally, eagerly availed of these reports to damage the character of the new movement, and to make Keshub an object of public disesteem. But they failed. The charge has been repeatedly proved to be groundless, and the fact pointed out that the Brahmo devotees not only honored their minister, but each other, and the minister also paid honor to them. It was a necessary consequence of the devotional excitement. When God is loved and obeyed we cannot but love and cherish our brethren.

During all this time the mutual relations of men in the Brahmo Somaj had been those existing among the members of any social assembly. They for the first time now began to recognize each other in the sacred character of devotees, servants, sons, and friends of God. Hence the mutual reverence. It might have been exag-

gerated at times, but that was natural considering the reactionary circumstances under which the feeling first developed. After our long experience in Brahmo Somaj, all we can say is that it would have been better for the institution and its adherents if there had been more brotherly love and honor amongst them.

This enthusiasm of worship and prayer recast into fresh spiritual models the whole character of the Brahmo Somaj. Men's relations with God were renewed. They came to have reverence for the prophets and great spiritual leaders of the world. Fresh ideals of character were presented before them. Fresh views of religion dawned before their view. Altogether a new life and career opened before them. This career has been the career of the Brahmo Somaj of India. And none has gained by this devotional excitement so much as Keshub and the small band of Brahmo Missionaries who have followed him for many years.

The character of this devotional or Bhakti movement, it ought here to be observed, is not

only Hindu but of that peculiar type of Hinduism known as the religion of the Vaishnavas. The previous history of the Brahmo Somaj bore no affinity to the genius of this sect. The Brahmo Somaj was noted for nothing so much as a cold colorless rationalism and anti-idolatrous contemptuousness which sneered at every sect showing any definite spiritual type. And the Vaishnavas were noted for nothing so much as grotesque personal habits, intense wild devotional excitement leading sometimes to unconsciousness. The Vaishnavas were neither socially high, nor distinguished by modern education. The Brahmo Somaj was the resort of the learned, the brilliant, the aspiring, and well-to-do. It is difficult to say what induced the leaders of the Brahmo Somaj to borrow the old-fashioned plebian forms of Vishnava music and musical appurtenances. The unfashionable *khole* and *kartal* were suddenly adopted though not without protest on the part of some. The unscientific popular tunes of the Vaishnavas came into vogue. In fact the Brahmo Somaj seemed to incorporate into itself the entire spirit of Vaishnavism. We have in a previous

chapter tried to show that the spirit of Vaishnavism is *Bhakti*, or the intense enthusiasm of love. When the devotions of the Brahmo Somaj under the mysterious guidance of the Providence that presides over the whole history of its progress, adopted that spirit, everything in it put on a new aspect. New fields of activity opened. Sympathizers from foreign countries began to correspond. New Brahmo Somajes began to be established all over the country. A book containing extracts from the scriptures of all nations was published, and took the place of the old *Brahma Dhurma Gruntha* (Book of the religion of Brahmos), which contained extracts from Hindu scriptures only. New reforms on the subject of marriage began to be contemplated. Great missionary undertakings began to be planned. The foundation stone of the Brahmo Mandir was laid. Altogether from the time of this devotional development, which may be called the third and the greatest revival in the Brahmo Somaj, till then, the Brahmo Somaj of India emerged into a nobler and more extensive career than it ever had before.

Missionary Agency in the Brahmo Somaj.

ONE of the most important features in the Brahmo Somaj has been its missionary organization. The twenty-four Brahmo Missionaries that we have got constitute the centre and foundation of the movement. They are its chief servants, feeders, guardians, elders, apostles, writers, thinkers, and ministers. The Brahmo Somaj may be said to hang on them, to look up to them for moral, social, intellectual, and spiritual strength. They are most of them men between forty and fifty. Their functions are various. Many of them conduct services, preach and lecture. They preside at anniversaries, celebrate domestic ceremonies, go on visitation tours, and help men who are in trouble. Some of them are mainly engaged in writing and editing. Some of them have undertaken the duty of supporting and looking after the households of other missionaries. One of them spends his time in charitable work, collecting, and dispensing funds for that purpose. One of them

has made Sanskrit theology his speciality, another has made Mahomedan theology the study of his life. They take no salary, but the great majority of them are supplied with the necessaries of life by the Brahmo Somaj Mission Office to the extent of its resources, which are exceedingly limited. Almost all of them have wives and children, and a great many have little houses of their own which, in some cases, have been built at the public expense, and in other cases at the expense of the owners themselves, who sold off their old ancestral houses and other property for that purpose. Most of them have to live in a very reduced style, and sometimes do without the necessaries of life. They have adopted the principle of absolute dependence upon God, and apostolic faith, not providing for the morrow, and working not for money, but for the service of God. They travel in every part of India, perform every duty that may be required of them. Some of them have travelled to Europe. Almost every one being a vegetarian, they have the most simple habits. They principally keep up the spirit of the Brahmo Somaj

by travelling from place to place. One of them suddenly died last year when away from family and friends in an extensive Missionary expedition. The Missionary agencies of the Brahmo Somaj are so important that some special notice of them is necessary.

Rajah Ram Mohun Roy as a Missionary.

The origin of the Brahmo Somaj Mission is to be traced in the circumstances which first gave rise to that institution. Conceived in the beginning as an idea which was the natural outcome of such independent education and thought as Rajah Ram Mohun Roy passed through in his early manhood, the worship of the One True God was proclaimed by him in the year 1830, more as a protest against the existing idolatry of the land, than as a positive duty, or spiritual necessity. It was judged of the extreme importance to the Somaj to secure as many converts from Hinduism as possible. The necessity of this course was, if possible, increased by the earnest endeavours of Christian Missionaries, like Dr. Duff and others,

who took advantage of the spreading light of knowledge, to direct the mind of the rising generation from idolatry to a better system of faith. Surrounded thus by orthodox Christians on the one hand, and by orthodox Hindus on the other, Rajah Ram Mohun Roy felt that the success of his movement lay almost entirely in the speedy adoption of such measures as might effectually disseminate his views and principles among his educated countrymen. He had therefore begun even long before the foundation of the Somaj to propagate his cherished ideas on religion. The first publication which he ever issued attacking the principles of Hinduism, and setting up those of natural religion, came out early as the year 1789, when the future reformer was only a youth of sixteen years. His later and maturer productions date from about the year 1819, eleven years before the Somaj was established, when he published a form of divine worship, inculcating universal peace and brotherhood among men. But the views then propagated closely bordered upon Vedantic, or pantheistic philosophy. It

is interesting to note that about this time Rajah Ram Mohun Roy founded a school in Calcutta, in which Devendra Nath Tagore, his future successor, then in his early boyhood, received the first elements of education, and perhaps imbibed a taste for that rational and independent thought which has been subsequently developed to such advantage. But the principal means, till then discovered to carry out the object of propagation, were the publication of books, and the holding of public theological controversies. Both these means were laid hold of with a zeal, energy, ability, and perseverance characteristic of all the Rajah's labours. Not to speak of his newspaper organs, his learned disquisitions on the Hindu shasters, the frequent controversies he held with learned Pundits and Christian missionaries, and the triumphs which he constantly achieved in these discussions, bear complete testimony to this fact. He was successful not only with his own countrymen, many of the wealthy and well-educated among whom regularly attended the Somaj, but even in the midst of Europeans, with whom he came

in contact. The greatest victory gained by him in these efforts was the conversion of the Rev. William Adams, an able and celebrated Christian Missionary, who publicly renounced his belief in Trinitarian orthodoxy in the year 1827, and confessed his belief in the One True God. It is evident that all this which the Rajah did, he considered to be the work of his life. In carrying it out he spared neither time, trouble, nor expense, nor even, what was much dearer to him, the feelings of the community in the midst of which he lived. And as a necessary consequence of such fearlessness, the Rajah's life was often imperilled, so much so that it is said he was obliged sometimes to carry weapons of self-defence with him. Rajah Ram Mohun Roy's missionary principle was to preach a reformed Hinduism to Hindus, and a reformed Christianity to Christians. Hence his personal views on the subject of religion were misrepresented and misunderstood. He was called Hindu by Hindus, Christian by Christians, Mohamedan by Mohamedans. The Rajah's well-known journey to England, from which he

never returned, cannot be directly called a missionary undertaking. But one of its objects was certainly to attract extensive and enlightened sympathy to the Brahmo Somaj which he recently established. His success, though not very great, has certainly been helpful to other theistic workers who visited England after him.

Devendra Nath Tagore as a Missionary.

In leaving this country for Europe the founder of the Brahmo Somaj left that institution in a perfectly disorganized state, with hardly any means of continuing its operations amidst a hostile Hindu community. His unexpected death only heightened this disorganization, and till the year 1839 the Somaj barely continued to keep up its existence. In that year Babu Devendra Nath Tagore, who only a short time ago had turned his thoughts to the subject of religion, founded the *Tatwabodhiny Sava*, noticed before, a society established on modern European principles, with a constitution and a membership, which virtually took over the charge of Rajah Ram Mohun Roy's church, organized its work, defrayed its expenses, and above all propagated

its principles. This was done with an earnestness and success which created for the Somaj such influence and prestige as was never possessed before. The organ of this society, called the *Tatwabodhiny Puttrica*, started in the year 1843, our principal missionary agency at that time, discussed the doctrines of the Brahmo Somaj, published its sermons, discussed other religions, and continued to spread all manner of important theological and secular knowledge through its columns, which attracted large numbers of people to the Somaj. A school was also established in the same year at a village called Bansbaria in the Mofussil, to impart secular and religious knowledge. The school did not last long, and is only important as showing a phase of missionary development in the Somaj. But the largest number of converts ever made was in the year 1844 by a method discovered by Devendra Nath of instituting a formal covenant for the enlistment of those who publicly joined the Brahmo Somaj. Agents were actively employed in different parts of Bengal, whose

sole business it was to persuade men to become Brahmos,* and hundreds were thus attracted to affix their names to the new covenant, not a few among whom never cared to inquire into the principles of the institution which they joined. In the meanwhile the weekly worship held in the Somaj had begun to be steadily reformed till, by the increased power and piety of the service, the congregation speedily swelled and multiplied. As a result of these operations, and the consequent activity which was imparted thereby to the Brahmo workers, theistic principles spread from them among their friends and relatives in the villages, until branch Brahmo Somajes began to be established in the Mofussil. The Brahmo Somaj at Krishnaghur, established in 1844, is the earliest of these provincial churches, the first fruit of the early missionary operations of our church. By a somewhat singular coincidence we find that here it was that Keshub Chunder Sen in 1861 first served, as it were, his apprenticeship to an apos-

* Lalla Hazari Lal, an up-country Hindu, and Hurrodeb Chatterjea, a Bengali Brahmin, formally became Brahmo preachers at this time.

tolic life, and commenced those provincial preachings, which, by him and his friends, have been carried on, not only all over this country, but even in other parts of the world. The declaration of the fundamental principles of the Brahmo Somaj, the abolition of Vedantism, and the publication of the Brahmo Dhurmo book in 1852, closed the labours of Devendra Nath Tagore for the first period of his connection with the church. These labours, which extended through ten years and more, did not unfortunately end in happiness, or harmony of spirits. And the disagreement ultimately turned to be so serious as to breed a deep despondency in his mind, and led to his temporary retirement. Thus Devendra Nath, so long as he was allowed to work, tried to propagate the principles of Ram Mohun Roy's movement by a better organization of his church; firstly through the *Tatwabodhiny Sava*, and its well-known *Puttrica* or organ; secondly, by a better system of divine worship in the Somaj; thirdly, by the establishment of the Brahmo covenant; fourthly, by the organization of a small community; and, lastly, by

the issue of the Brahmo Dhurmo Gruntha, and the declaration of theistic principles which it contained. In this great work he was helped and guided by colleagues whose names and services it would be unfair to omit. The chief among these was Akhay Kumar Dutt, the editor of the *Tatwabodbiny Puttrica*, who, for a period of many years, led the Brahmo Somaj by the power of his intellect, and the perseverance of his research, almost as much as Devendra led it by the natural force of his religious sentiment. Nay it was the collision of the two elements, as said before, that tended to the first discord in the Somaj. Another name that we must mention is that of Ram Chunder Vidyabagis, a humble Pundit, who, from the days of Rajah Ram Mohun Roy, conducted the weekly service of the Somaj, reading sermons and explaining texts with great power of piety. His memory is tenderly cherished in many a heart, and a poor Brahmin as he was, when he died in the year 1845, he left a legacy of Rs. 500 to the Somaj, which, for various exigencies of that institution, the present writer has had to make use of.

The second period of Devendra Nath Tagore's career commenced with the year 1859, when he joined with Keshub Chunder Sen, and opened the Brahmo school. We must date from this time the first manifestation of that mysterious force in the Brahmo Somaj which has since worked in a double direction, deepening the spiritual and moral life of the institution within, and spontaneously calling out the forces thus created to move, through missionary labour, the whole organization of Hindu society. So much, and so continuously has that internal life been developed and intensified, that the philosophy of Brahmo faith now includes all that is profoundest and most blessed in the spiritual experience of the world. So proportionately and powerfully have the inward impulses been embodied into missionary efforts of love for the spread of God's kingdom, and the establishment of peace and good will among men, that the Brahmo preacher now finds the only occupation of his life in the service of his God. The beginning of the operation of such a missionary spirit was fitly celebrated by the union of two souls, the uniqueness of whose

relation is somewhat unparalleled in this country. The mature man of fifty joined himself to the eager youth of twenty-three, and they both agreed to labour with a cheerfulness and enthusiasm which none had experienced before. Recently returned from the Himalayas, whither he had retired, Devendra Nath acquired a rejuvinescence of soul, and feeling young again with his youthful colleague, began to preach and lecture, in and out of Calcutta, with a spirit and vigour which more than counterbalanced his temporary inactivity. To the vernal freshness of a soul which, after a long torpor, was thus reanimated, he added a maturity of wisdom and experience, together with a depth of devotion acquired in the ancient solitudes of the holy Himalayas. And all this imparted to his utterances, naturally deep and eloquent, a power and beauty almost unearthly, that set before his hearers a glowing ideal of spiritual religion, never to be forgotten by those who then listened to him. He preached regularly in the Somaj and lectured in the Brahmo school, and in the year 1861, celebrated the marriage of his

daughter according to a reformed theistic ritual. This system of domestic reform, practised according to the spirit of truth, hitherto untried, spread the influence and success of the Brahmo Somaj far and wide, and formed a turning point in the history of our church. If Devendra Nath had kept faithful to the spirit by which he was thus inspired for four years, it is difficult to say where it would have led him. But he stopped short, the unhappy rupture followed, and with it the Brahmo Somaj occupied quite a new position in regard to its missionary operations. The saddest consequence of the rupture was perhaps that it broke the heart of that venerable man, disappointed his hopes, and completely shook his faith in his own movement. He deserted his work, and retired to the hills again, where he now lives. Now and then he comes to Calcutta, but his spirit is absent from the Brahmo Somaj, and even his favourite institution at Jorasanko is no longer graced by his imposing presence. Often have we prayed and tried for a reconciliation, but a reconciliation it has not pleased Providence yet

to grant. If it never takes place in this world, let us be sadly thankful that the rupture, painful as it has been on both sides, has fulfilled its destiny, namely the advancement of God's glory in India, and the consolidation of His church for the future.

Keshub Chunder Sen and his friends.

From what has been said above it will be easy to infer that the missionary element has predominated in the Brahmo Somaj since the connection of Babu Keshub Chunder Sen in 1859. Before that time the missionary efforts of that institution were indirect and desultory, dictated by occasional necessities and inclinations, and anything like an ideal missionary character was never conceived. A Brahmo preacher or writer was always a paid agent, or a man who, amidst arduous worldly occupations, utilized his leisure by devoting it to the service of the Somaj. The motto of the new leader was absolute devotedness to the service of God. He viewed a missionary's work as "the destiny of human life." He strongly advocated the

renunciation of every other work for the work of the Divine Master. In January 1861, consistent to his own principle, he left the secular employment he held in the Bank of Bengal, and devoted himself exclusively, without the least remuneration, to the service of his church. Under a teacher like this a new phase of character was developed in the Brahmo Somaj. In a small humble corner of the large family house of the Sens of Calcutta, Keshub had founded, in the year 1860, a small conversational society where he and his friends, mostly young men in or just out of college, discussed the most important topics of religious life. This society was subsequently named the *Sungut Sava*. Here the youthful enthusiasts, under Keshub's direction, prayed and discussed, and compared their lives, heedless of hunger or sleep, with a devotedness which alarmed their friends and relatives at home. Here their characters were changed, their aspirations changed, and the plans and objects of their lives were recast and ennobled. The result was as might be foreseen. Some of the youth-

ful Brahmos were fired by a zeal to propagate their religion as soon as they heard that the light of the Brahmo Somaj was hailed with delight in many parts of their native land, and with that object they manfully gave up their ordinary pursuits. (The first to do this was Pundit Bejoy Kissen Goswamy in 1863, then a medical student.) Of these the majority trace their religious life to the *Sungut Sava*, from which may be said to have originated the Brahmo Mission, as it is now carried on. We have thus secured an able and enthusiastic body of missionaries, all of them men in the prime vigor of life, and devoted with their family and children to their cause. And by them the society for the propagation of theism, which has now merged into the mission department of the Brahmo Somaj of India, was first organized in 1865.

Organization of the Mission Office.

Almost simultaneously with the establishment of the Brahmo Somaj of India the band of devoted young men, now no longer young,

organized themselves into a missionary body. Brahmo missionaries had been talked of from a little time before, but no organization had taken place. The Brahmo Somaj of India began its career as an apostolical church. Every one of the men, who joined it as missionary, had in his heart to take the vow of poverty. And right loyally did they take and keep that vow. The Brahmo missionaries, including the minister, did not count more than seven or eight in those days, and they are now three times that number. But the spirit of enthusiasm and self-sacrifice which they then manifested has not been surpassed at any time. Every one of them resigned his place and prospects in the world, volunteered his life-long services to the cause, and consciously and willingly embraced poverty and all manner of tribulations. They daily took out a few pieces of copper coin which the minister's writing box contained, and that box had never contained much. With that they purchased their supplies, and spent the day in prayer, study, contemplation, conversation and other occupa-

tions befitting the work they had taken up. One of them had a dangerous chest-disease, and he had no warm clothing of any kind. Another lost his mother on a distant pilgrimage. They had to feed and clothe themselves most insufficiently. The Brahmo Somaj of India had no funds in those days. But its missionaries, who were its servants and directors, were only the more stimulated, the more they sacrificed themselves. Their own lives supplied them with the gospel of practical religion. This apostolic ardour has at all times been kept up. They first lived and then preached the doctrine of "think not for the morrow." Their asceticism grew in them before they knew how to name it. They came never expecting any salary, never taking any remuneration, they resigned their all to their church. Their calling and their self-sacrifice made their faith intense, gave fervor to their devotions, moulded their characters, defined their relationships. Their devotions and mutual relations formed their views, and shaped their ideas. The spirit of Providence created in them and through them

the future character of the church of the New Dispensation. They travelled from place to place with a fierce and all-suffering zeal. Wherever they went Somajes started into being, enthusiasm was kindled, and reforms germinated. Through their agency the Brahmo Somaj entered into an untried field of religious life. The cause began to make unforeseen and unexpected progress. Years have gradually added to the numerical strength and practical importance of this missionary organization. But the Brahmo Somaj in the New Dispensation still retains its old missionary character. Our chief workers are formally called apostles. Only in this most recent stage of development the apostles want to preach more through the agency of their lives and characters than by mere speech and itinerancy.

Missionary Operations.

The operations of these missionaries were naturally confined at first to Bengal, and the first interesting report of the kind that we find is that of the visit of Keshub Chunder Sen to Krishnaghore in the year 1861. But

in March next year Keshub Chunder Sen left for Bombay and Madras, where, by his lectures and preachings, he created a very strong impression in the minds of the people of those presidencies. This was the first grand attempt ever made by the Somaj to propagate its faith in distant parts of the country, and the success gained, emboldened us to carry on our missionary operations with increased zeal and vigor. We found out clearly with what warmth and eagerness the principles of the Somaj were accepted everywhere, even by nations entirely disconnected by history or habits with our own. In the year 1863 Bejoy Kissen Goswamy, and the late Saint Aughor Nath Gupta, began their preachings in East Bengal, creating, everywhere they went, powerful effect, which stirred up deep feelings in favor of our movement. East Bengal, which was subsequently visited by Keshub, has been the most fruitful field of theistic labours. The people are intelligent, simple, susceptible, and energetic. Dacca possesses now a missionary organization of its own under the leadership

of Bungo Chunder Roy, who is our apostle in the Eastern Districts. In the next year 1864 Devendra Nath Tagore himself went on a missionary visit to the North-Western Provinces and Bareilly, where a Brahmo Somaj was newly started. Railway communication has now been established between different parts of the country, thus enabling our missionaries to proceed to other lands and peoples, and foster a gradual development of their character and work. In the next year, 1865, several missionaries, together with Keshub at their head, proceeded through Upper India into the Punjab, where they stayed some time, and brought the Panjabis into that close contact with our movement which has ultimately resulted in the establishment of the Punjab Brahmo Somaj. In 1870 Keshub Chunder Sen made his departure for Europe. His operations there are too well known to require any mention at this place. In the same year Amrita Lall Bose, Gour Gobind Roy, and Protap Chunder Mozoomdar left for Mangalore, on the Western coast of India, where the aid of the Brahmo

Somaj was earnestly solicited. From that place the last named went across the Peninsula to Madras, where some agitation was produced by the theistic lectures delivered. It was in the very same year that the much lamented Aughor Nath Gupta travelled in Cachar and Assam. In the next year Protap Chunder Mozoomdar proceeded to the Punjab again, and in 1872 he preached for the greater part of the year in Bombay, Poona, and Ahmedabad. In 1873 Aughor Nath visited Orissa for the first time, and a number of other missionaries proceeded to the Punjab. As the reports of most of these operations have been published, we omit the details.

Methods of Preaching.

We may now try to give some of the methods by which our missionaries try to carry on the work of propagation. The chief means they employ is the holding of Divine services where they go, in the course of which they utter *extempore* sermons full of the precepts and principles of our religion. These sermons, which conclude

with oral prayers, are often very stirring, and are adapted in every case to the wants and circumstances of those who come to hear them. Brahmo missionaries are never found to write their sermons, because, if written, they must be more or less formal and speculative, and cannot be as fully and practically applicable to their hearers as when spoken. These hearers are composed of men of every class, from the most ignorant and confirmed Hindus to the most obstinate sceptics and atheists. Though we now and then get converts from these extreme sections of society, most of those who become Brahmos belong to the middle and educated classes, that are balanced between orthodox idolatry and absolute unbelief. The second means adopted is public lecturing. Brahmo Missionaries often proceed to places where the people are completely unaccustomed to any form of private or public worship in the spiritual sense of that word. Divine Service held there would not be appreciated at first, and to prepare men for it general subjects for lecture are taken up, in

the course of which the audience is lovingly and skilfully persuaded not only to give their assent to theistic doctrines, which they readily do, but receive the spirit of our church which leads them to repentance, prayer, and purity of character. Most of the Brahmo Somajes in the Mofussil have been established after the delivery of such lectures, by the indirect effects of them. But sermons and lectures, however effective and practical, cannot answer the wants and doubts of every individual hearer, because the latter is allowed no opportunity to express his own sentiments on what he hears. We seldom allow any discussion to take place after our preachings. It is therefore found necessary to hold conversational meetings where the freest expression of ideas and feelings on the part of inquirers is solicited, and the mission-ary sits among his brethren cheerfully answering questions, resolving doubts, and laying down clear and wholesome maxims, on points of moral and spiritual life, as beneficial to others, as to himself. We frame below an instance of the Diary of a Brahmo Missionary :—

The Diary of ———— B., Missionary at ————.

MONDAY.	TUESDAY.	WEDNESDAY.	THURSDAY.	FRIDAY.	SATURDAY.	SUNDAY.
Visits to people after arrival. Kindly received. Stopped with G.——	Service and sermon at my lodgings well attended. Effect:—A young man threw up his sacred thread. A conference with orthodux Hindus. Presented with a tiger-skin and an ascetic's bowl (Kamandalu.)	Public lecture on Religious culture. Effect:—Middling. A Christian clergyman made an angry reply. But the audience left before he had finished.	Family services at a friends. Good many ladies attended and showed much emotion.	Religious conversation. Questions on the subjects of animal food and the next world. A fashionable looking young man carried on a long controversy, advocating the opinions of Mr. Herbert Spencer and Auguste Comte.	Performed the Jat Karma ceremony of——'s little daughter. Procession and Sankirtan. Gave an address at the Ghats (Riverside.)	Open air meeting for the masses in the afternoon and service in the Somaj. Sermon on Special Providence. Great effect.

We hope the above will give some idea of what missionaries do when they go out to preach, and the kind of reception they meet from the different kinds of people whom they address. They never have had the least occasion to complain, and however humble their efforts may have been, they have uniformly achieved greater success than they ever ventured to expect. As a rule, orthodox Hindus and the fair sex manifest greater sympathy with the devotional element in our operations than the educated, whereas the latter show a much more intelligent appreciation of our doctrines and theology than the other. It is impossible, however, for our missionaries to visit all the scores of Somajes every year, situated as these are in different parts of the country at the distance of hundreds, and some of them thousands of miles from each other. We therefore issue missionary journals, both in English and Bengali, as well as lectures and tracts which set forth the progress and principles of our movement, and keep our fellow-theists in this great country properly informed in all matters essential to their religious welfare. A list of

important theistic publications in English and Bengali is regularly published in our newspapers, and full details about them may be had on reference to the Brahmo Somaj Mission Office. But we do not rest satisfied with publishing these books only. Several Brahmo Somajes have schools and societies called *Sungut Savas* attached to them, which, by means of education and discussion, disseminate the truths of our faith among the rising generation of both sexes.

Popular Preaching.

Since the foundation of the Brahmo Somaj all our efforts after propagation had been confined among the better classes of the population, and exclusively within the male sex. It never occurred to the elders of our church that the poor, uneducated, and unfortunate women of this country had as much right to the light of God's truth, and the blessedness of a genuine faith as the educated and the well-to-do. Years, therefore, had passed on and nothing had been done to bring the influence of the Brahmo Somaj to bear on the gentler sex, and the lower

classes of Hindu society. But the present leader of the Brahmo Somaj is not a man upon whom the demands of any part of the community can be lost. He saw the glaring deficiency of his church in this matter, and set himself to remove it. The Brahmica Somaj, or the church for Brahmo ladies, was established in 1865 in a small house occupied by one of our friends* Here weekly worship used to be held for the ladies only, and sermons were preached suited to their special necessities. Brahmo gentlemen sent their wives and sisters to this institution for some years, till the Brahmo Mandir was established in the year 1869, when a separate gallery was erected for the ladies where, to this day, they sit in large numbers, and take part in the public worship of the Brahmo Somaj of India. But the masses were still uncared for. In the year 1867 Keshub Chunder Sen delivered his first address to the shopkeepers, and the poor of Krishnagore. From the anniversary of 1872 open air addresses commenced to be delivered to thousands of the

* This has subsequently grown into the Aryanari Somaj, which weekly holds its divine services conducted by one of the ladies.

common people with great effect. Since then Keshub's fellow-missionaries have imitated his example, preaching to the masses when they go out into the country.* The sympathies of the poor and the uneducated are thus attracted to our movement, and an effectual refutation offered to the unfounded statement that the religious beliefs of the Brahmo Somaj are not suited to the simple instincts of unlettered humanity. There are at least two Brahmo Somajes consisting of mostly unlettered men, the one at Bagachra in East Bengal, and the other at Amragori in Southern Bengal.

We have attempted to give a brief account of the development of the Brahmo Mission. Ourselves in the very midst of the movement, perhaps we have not been able to take as full and impartial a survey as we wished. We have simply given the facts as they occurred to us. One principle predominates in all our missionary movements. We never try to force the minds of men. We carry with us the spirit

* This developed into the remarkable missionary expedition of 1879.

of our movement where we go, and do not worry our hearers with our own interpretations and speculations. We try to awaken in men the slumbering consciousness of God, the blessed consciousness of His love and care universally acknowledged in the world, and the supreme privilege of trust and reliance upon Him, amidst all the needs of life and eternity. As for the rest, we leave it to the ever-present Reality of God's Spirit to work out in the fulness of time.

The Support of Missionaries.

There was a time when it was difficult even to provide for the family of a single missionary. Now the number of families is eighteen, and they consist of men, women, and children. Our missionaries have resigned themselves and their families altogether to the all-preserving care of God, and every one of them acts upon that golden principle "the Lord will provide." In fact it is their deep confidence in the goodness of God which teaches them to do their respective duties without any thought for

food or raiment. They trust that they and their households will be supplied with the necessaries of life. And it has been practically so far nearly the last twenty-five years. Our deep gratitude is due to those of our kind-hearted brothers and sisters from whom we have received donations, and monthly and yearly subscriptions to meet the expenses of our missionaries and their families. We are compelled to find the purpose of Providence working in their souls when we think of their abiding goodness to those who have devoted their entire lives to the progress of the Brahmo community. But, on the other hand, it is a matter of regret that the number of such men is very small, and the pecuniary aid received from those who pay falls exceedingly short of what is necessary for our missionaries and their families. Some of our Brahmo brethren again are indifferent, and only a few are at all desirous to help the missionaries. There are some again who desire to help them but not their families. But with or without difficulty the missionaries of the Brahmo Somaj

have been fed and clothed, and they have continued to serve the Somaj with all their hearts. They have worked under disadvantages, but they have always worked with courage and success.

Election of Missionaries.

We have no school in which we train our apostles. We do not persuade, we do not tempt, we even do not suggest to any one to become a missionary. Yet year by year we are getting accessions to our apostolical body. At present we have twenty-four missionary workers, almost all of whom are family men, some of them with large families. Why and how do they come? The general ministry of the Brahmo Somaj suffices for all purposes, even for the purpose of recruiting our missionary ranks, though of course there are naturally shades and grades of spiritual progress in the community. The influence of our apostolical ministrations works in all classes, it reaches the more as well as the less spiritually advanced among our brethren. Some among these gradually feel more and more drawn in heart to the small

community of missionary workers. They are stirred inwardly to make their relations with the latter more intimate. They have been almost as a rule men employed in Government or other offices, some of them drawing very good salaries. The impulse that draws them first reaches them through the medium of our weekly and daily devotions, grows year after year stronger, and still more strong. They feel desirous to devote themselves to the work of the church. At first they begin by employing their leisure hours and holidays to this work. The impulse is thus partly satisfied, but with this partial satisfaction it becomes stronger still. They *almost* become missionaries. The desire of throwing up their appointments, and giving all their time to the holy work of God visits them, seizes them. But if they happen to be men with large families, which almost all of them are, they hesitate. This hesitation is longer or shorter according to the nature and circumstances of the men. But wherever the impulse has been real, in every instance it has ended in one way only.

The men felt it was a call from God, they gave up their employment, and took the vow of the missionary. From being missionaries *almost*, they become missionaries *altogether*. Thus they are called.

Now as no one insists or even persuades them to be missionaries, so no one promises them any support when they take the apostolical vow. The vow consists of nothing more than a spontaneous prayer at the Sanctuary on the part of the applicant announcing his resolution, about which, in almost all cases, no communication to any one is made beforehand. He announces his determination, ceases to go to his office, and places his whole time at the disposal of the Missionary Conference. No demonstration of any sort is made at his joining, no ceremony is performed, even no notice is outwardly taken of the fact. If his circumstances allow, as they do in the beginning, the new missionary supports himself and his family after as before his vow. If he is penniless the Mission Office gives him food. He does any work that may be given him to do. He sel-

dom undertakes any work of important preaching. He is always with the missionaries, and the Minister hears them conversing, sees them working, watches their principles, marks the progress of their devotions, and other details of their lives. Thus he goes on humbly from week to week, from month to month, and sometimes it so happens that years elapse before he is sent out as a real and recognized missionary. Thus he is quietly educated. In the course of a year or two years however, his tendencies and aptitudes develop, and he is either sent out to the Mofussil when an appeal for missionary labour is received from any station, or he is retained in Calcutta to assist the different departments of our work. It must be borne in mind that our missionary-work is of two sorts—it is either preaching and lecturing, or undertaking important missionary responsibilities, such as the administration of charity, the education of women, moral instruction of boys, supporting the families of missionaries, &c. We hold both these departments of missionary work equally sacred.

The support of our missionaries is conducted entirely by the principle of faith and dependence upon God. The income of the Mission Office is small. We receive the voluntary contributions of the public, gather the proceeds of the various branches of our work, and with that support the families of our missionaries. Our ideas and operations on this subject have been explained before. The missionaries are governed in the relations of their work and life by a Conference at which the Minister presides. Their requirements, their domestic and personal necessities, their plans and aspirations of work are all met by the decisions of that body. Their doubts are resolved, their principles are formed, their differences are reconciled, and their faults are corrected. The history of the operations of the Missionary Conference will one day contribute a most important element to the history of our movement.

List of Brahmo Missionaries.

	Name.	Age.	Caste.	When Joined	Family.
1	Keshub Chunder Sen ..	44	Vaidya ..	1861	Wife and ten children.
2	Protap Chunder Mozoomdar ..	42	Do. ..	1862	Wife. No child.
3	Wooma Nath Gupta ..	43	Do. ..	1865	Wife and three children.
4	Bejoy Kissen Gossain* ..	41	Brahmin ..	1863	Wife and three children.
5	Amrita Lal Bose ..	42	Kaistha ..	1864	Wife and three children.
6	Mohendro Nath Bose ..	43	Do. ..	1865	Wife. No child.
7	Kanty Chunder Mitter ..	44	Do. ..	1867	Widower. No child.
8	Saint Aghore Nath Gupta ..	40	Vaidya ..	1863	Widow and three children.
9	Trylokya Nath Sanyal ..	42	Brahmin ..	1867	Wife and three children.
10	Greesh Chunder Sen ..	43	Vaidya ..	1872	Widower No child.
11	Gour Govind Roy ..	42	Do. ..	1866	Widower. Two children.
12	Prosonno Coomar Sen ..	45	Do. ..	1871	Wife and three children.
13	Kadar Nath Day ..	44	Kaistha ..	1873	Wife and eight children.
14	Dino Nath Mozoomdar ..	43	Do. ..	1873	Wife and eight children.
15	Peary Mohun Chowdry ..	38	Vaidya ..	1870	Bachelor.
16	Kali Shunker Kabiraj ..	45	Kaistha ..	1881	Wife and two children.
17	Ram Chunder Singha ..	42	Do. ..	1875	Wife and two children.
18	Bungo Chunder Roy ..	42	Vaidya ..	1873	Wife and four children.
19	Ishan Chunder Sen ..	32	Do. ..	1875	Wife and two children.
20	Doorga Nath Roy ..	32	Kaistha ..	1875	Wife and four children.
21	Baikanta Nath Ghose ..	28	Do. ..	1875	Bachelor.
22	Kailash Chunder Nandi ..	34	Do. ..	1875	Wife and two children.
23	Chundra Mohan Kurmakar ..	31	Blacksmith ..	1876	Bachelor.
24	Dina Nath Kurmakar ..	39	Do. ..	1876	Widower. No child.

* Bejoy Kissen no longer belongs to the Brahmo Somaj of India; he joined the Sadharan Somaj in 1878, and now forms one of the body of protesters.

Social Reforms in the Brahmo Somaj.

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NO department of the work undertaken by the Brahmo Somaj has found greater sympathy from the public than the important social reforms it has aimed to introduce. What these reforms are we shall try to set forth as we proceed. We desire, to commence the subject with the statement that this branch of our work has been found to be a necessity in the natural development of our religious principles. It is a great mistake to think that the social reforms, which the Brahmo Samaj has been able to carry out up to this time, are the results of that spirit of imported Europeanism which is always protesting against everything in the parent society. A great many Europeans sympathize with social reforms because these are supposed to draw us closer to the customs of European society. Change in the habits of eating and drinking has thus been regarded as a social reform. A promiseuous comingling of the sexes is another reform. These no doubt tend to

promote a temporary social excitement. But such was not at all the motive which led to social reforms in the Brahmo Somaj. When the present elders of the movement were very young men, their attention was forcibly drawn to the want of moral strictness which is such a sad feature of the rising generation of educated Hindus. And they determined to acquire moral purity in their lives. They used twenty-two years ago to have long meetings, sometimes sitting up the whole night, to aid each other in remedying the deficiencies of personal character, and solving the moral difficulties that arose in the daily conduct of their lives. Hindu society at this period was so entirely out of joint that for such men as earnestly held any religious views, which were contrary to the accepted idolatrous notions, to act according to their convictions in the different relations of life, was almost impossible. But the young men, headed by Keshub Chunder Sen, to whom we allude, had determined not only to be *religious* but *moral* also. They meant to purge the whole atmosphere of the Brahmo

Somaj of the taint of practical inconsistency. And they took up the work in their private circle. They addressed themselves to such topics as the following: Veracity; Honesty; Pure-mindedness; Formation of habits; Distinctions of caste; Domestic relations and duties; Proper use of time and money; Social obligations and public duties, &c. Their decisions were embodied in a little book which is now unfortunately out of print. All this was done in connection with a society called the Sungut Sava. Well, these attempts at personal reform and purity led to certain questions of social importance. For instance could a man, who was thoroughly veracious and honest, continue to wear his sacred thread, if he was a Brahmin, in deference to the false prejudices of his kinsmen? Could a man who had ceased to believe in castes, marry or give in marriage, according to orthodox religious forms? Such questions could only be answered in the negative. And those who proposed to themselves to solve to their own satisfaction these problems, had but one course of action left to them. They were forced to launch into reforms

which, commencing with a purely personal aspect, soon assumed a serious social importance. The notice of their castemen and guardians was soon drawn to their proceedings which produced alarm. They were excommunicated. And social reforms thus began. We need scarcely point out that the attempts after a strict personal morality which lay at the root of all this, were the necessary effects of the spirit of the fast developing religion of the Brahmo Somaj Growing and pcwerful spirituality compelled us to look to the holiness of every habit, and the holiness of the heart. And this new force of character compelled us to discover and pursue higher models of domestic and social life than what the parent society could give The social reforms in the Brahmo Somaj then were but the offshoots of its religion. We never desired and never commenced any social innovations which were not necessitated by spiritual emergency. We do not scruple to be radical when our spiritual principles force us to be revolutionary. We do not scruple to be conservative when the same principles demand

caution and quietness. We do not understand social reform as apart from religious advancement. We know from experience that spiritual progress always leads to social enlightenment, but we know from experience equally well that what is called commonly social reform may often lead to spiritual darkness and moral ruin.

Knowing and remembering all this we have had to undertake the great work of social reform. The relation between religious and social institutions in Hindu society has been so deep, practical and inseparable, that it must influence the action of every one who wants to purify the faith, and elevate the morality of the people. The social organization of the Hindus is the strictly natural outcome of the Hindu religion. It is more or less so in every highly organized society. In India, however, the relation is unique because of the rigid exclusion of foreign influences, and the unexampled predominance of a hereditary sacerdotal caste permeating the very depths of social life. The Brahmins acted most wisely in embodying all the prevalent religious notions of their times in

social usages, enlisting every personal, domestic, and public feeling on the side of these usages, and founding thereon an organization which involved within itself the happiness and interests of this world as well as of the next. A social organization thus doubly secured has stood firm amidst the ravages of false philosophy, and destructive ignorance, of internal strife, and the oppression of alien races for a great number of centuries. Hinduism has often changed its phases; manners and customs have often been modified accordingly; but in the midst of all these transformations the religious genius of the nation, as reflected by the spirit of Hindu society, has invariably retained a fixity, over the face of which no foreign innovations, even when backed by the dominance of conquering tyrants, have been able to leave a perceptible trace. Hindu society can be only reformed through the medium of religion.

In ceasing to believe in the popular forms of Hindu faith, the Brahmo Somaj found themselves surrounded by an elaborate machinery

of social ordinances, a very small quantum of which only could be conscientiously adopted by them in strict fidelity to their own convictions. On the contrary, they met with a good many which appeared positively mischievous in every way. Some of these had to be protested against, and some of them had to be removed at once. Take one instance. Rajah Ram Mohun Roy, while he was contemplating the establishment of the Brahmo Somaj, was so shocked by the then existing barbarity of *Suttee* burning, that he could not launch into the career of a religious reformer without taking powerful and effective measures for the suppression of the unrighteous practice which, chiefly by his endeavours, was stopped by the Legislature in 1829, the year immediately preceding the foundation of the Brahmo Somaj. This healthy acuteness of the moral sense has steadily grown with the spiritual growth of the institution, and made a protest against social evils not only necessary, but unavoidable. The religion of the Brahmos has run through stages of development, every one of which has been followed by a corresponding

development of the mind, heart, and conscience —leading to an increased insight into the truth and untruth of things, to an intense impatience of what is morally wrong, to an eager longing for the good and the beautiful in individual as well as in social life. This cannot but influence, however slowly, the motives of action. Gradually then the Brahmos have been awakened to the necessity of creating around them an atmosphere morally invigorating, religiously healthful, intellectually enlightening, that gives due exercise and nourishment to the feelings and instincts of the human mind in a state of transition and progress. It is our object to trace the course of this gradual awakening, and explain some of the circumstances connected with it.

The humanizing power of festivals in the life of communities is not always very clearly recognized. Social life would lose its binding force, its vivacity, even in a great measure its claims and duties, if not for these occasions of universal joy. Hinduism not only encourages these high festivals but throws into them the

warmth and pathos of domestic tenderness, the mysterious sacraments of religion, and an exchange of social services and good wishes, in the absence of which existence would often be a burden. But unhappily all such occasions are tainted with idolatry. In eschewing idolatry one must eschew almost the whole sweetness of social amenities in the present state of Hindu society, and lead the life of a philosophic recluse. Marriage, birth, and death, name-giving, rice-giving, and sacred-thread-giving, feast-days, fast-days and holidays, *pujahs*, *parvas*, and public entertainments are all more or less mixed with idol-worship. In wishing to give up all these, where should the Brahmos find their substitute? Not knowing how to replace them in the absence of any community that would aid, and cooperate, and share in difficulties, surrounded on all sides with orthodox friends and relatives, harmony with whom meant a common conformity to necessary social observances, the individual Brahmo for a long time had to live a life of public unfaithfulness. Christians and others taunted him on account of

his moral cowardice. The first ideas on the subject of forming a community on the basis of enlightened social observances were perhaps suggested by the anniversary gatherings that met even in those early days at the house of Babu Devendra Nath Tagore every twelvemonth. That was, and still is, the high festival of the Brahmos; and though it cannot be said that at any time it permeated the lives and character of Brahmos, as the chief festivals of the Hindus do, yet there is no doubt that it has always moved the hearts of many very deeply. Warm and delightful are the reminiscences which every Brahmo cherishes of those early annual gatherings on the 11th of Magh, the congratulations, embraces, rejoicings, the festive services and songs, sung by many together. The flowers, flags, and decorations, the brotherly meals and meetings overflowed with cheerfulness, sincerity, enthusiasm, and youthful spirits. We used to feel then very vividly that Brahmos might well bind themselves into a community, that there was enough of sympathy, warmth, high aspiration, zeal and

adhesive power in the movement. What we then felt as hope has now been realized as an experience; we have formed a community on a distinct religious basis and in social importance and influence, we are increasing both in and out of Bengal. The latent vitality of our infant institution felt at those seasons of festival nearly quarter of a century ago, when the consciousness, heightened by spiritual influences, foresaw the future, has now clothed itself in an exuberance of moral and social reforms which promise not only to impart to our movement a lasting social organization, but to include the whole Hindu society within the scope of its elevating influence. It has always seemed to us that the time for the Brahmos to forecast the future of their church is the time of their festivals.

From annual gatherings, these festivals have come to be held many times a year. Their devotional character has intensified. Their social importance has deepened. They repeatedly bring about the unions of Brahmos and their wives from different parts of the country, and opened the way to reforms. The first of these

important reforms was the instilling of theistic principles into the mind of the other sex. This does not seem much at first. But when it is said that learning these principles it became necessary for our wives and sisters to think of them; that thought and example led them gradually to the doors of devotion; that private prayers naturally induced domestic services, which, in their turn, created a longing to attend the places of public worship, perhaps some measure of the importance will be realized. Nor is that all. Reformed religious ideas could not but throw light on the intellect, they opened the key to new desires, excited new aspirations and feelings. The women reflected on their condition, moral, social, intellectual, wanted to know more, see more, enjoy more, and in short felt some foregleams of a better and brighter social destiny. That this new destiny has dawned on them in the Brahmo Somaj will be admitted even by those who are inclined to make a very moderate estimate of our work. That what ought, could, and should have been done for the women in the Brahmo Somaj has been left less than

half done cannot be denied even by those who are fond of making very favourable estimates. For the real workers in the Brahmo Somaj it is a matter of no little satisfaction that if they have been able to do nothing more, they have at least unlocked the door of that ancient prison—the zenana.

The rightful position of women in the Brahmo Somaj could very well form the subject of a separate paper. Here we have but space for a few words. When we say the doors of the zenana have been unlocked, we must not be understood to mean that all the barriers that have hitherto existed between the two sexes in this country have been completely removed, and that the fullest facilities for mutual intercourse have been allowed. The seclusion of women in this part of the world is based upon a natural and moral principle. Our people have not known how to discover or preserve the right attitude of mind towards the other sex. The difficulty has been felt and acknowledged by the best and saintliest spirits. It has often led to the utter avoidance of women as

an unmitigated evil in the path of religious men. It has not unfrequently led to gross and fearful excesses in the name of religion. It has produced the demoralization of men in certain communities, of women in certain others, and to a perfect stagnation of all social progress in not a few. How far the relations of the two sexes have been studied and established in Western countries we cannot say; and, though we are quite prepared to give them all the honor they deserve for assigning to woman the superior position she occupies in that part of the world, we wish to be excused if we cannot admit even that position to be the natural and rightful one. We cannot therefore undertake to adopt European usages on this subject safely. Not that we are averse to the principle of social equality, intellectual rights, or domestic precedence which woman ought to have, but we are of opinion that even these advantages—the absence of which we so much deplore here—when conferred, do not settle the main question of woman's position in society. The relative places of the two sexes remain very much the

same, and a woman thoroughly "emancipated" in this sense, becomes but the modified edition of an "educated" male. And we do not want masculine women. While, therefore, we have in the face of popular opposition discarded a great number of old restrictions as to the relations and restrictions between the sexes, and have tried from the beginning to give our wives and sisters the religious, moral, and intellectual education to which we think they are entitled, while we have endeavoured to introduce them by degrees into the company of good and enlightened men, (steps not only opposed to Hindu notions, but regarded by Hindus as immoral) we have still left the question of the permanent position of women in society to be determined in future by the development of the highest instincts both in man's and woman's nature, through the growth and influence of the spirit of our church which has so far modelled and reformed the character of both the sexes. There is one thing which must be confessed with shame and humiliation. Our men, by a long course of training in vicious ideas about the other sex,

are more or less unfit now to be allowed to mix with women, because they know not how to accord to them the manly and delicate treatment so natural with a great many Christian people. As the necessary result of this, women too, whose instinct of self-protection in such matters is truly wonderful, are shy, nervous, and most backward to meet the advances of enthusiastic reformers, whose revolutionary zeal often gets the better of their discretion and common sense. There are two extremes of which Brahmos ought to beware. The one is the extreme of conservative timidity that fears moral evil from every step taken in advance in the matter of female liberty and reform. The other is the extreme of thoughtless imitation of foreign customs, without any such safeguards and moral restrictions as exist wherever men and women are admitted into social intercourse. We have tried to lead our reform through these extremes. We have tried to do what is natural under our circumstances and antecedents. We have been teaching our women that they have a place in the

homestead, in the church, and in society—a place higher than what men occupy—a place they must fill and adorn by the beauty of their character. We have refrained from the ostentatious emancipation programme. Its boundaries, even in European countries, it is hard to define; it embarrasses, strains, often hardens the female mind under unfavorable conditions such as ours; it often leads men to temptation, and encourages the unprincipled among them to indulge in advances, destructive alike of progress and morality. In our Ladies' Institution we try to educate the female mind; in our Ladies' Society we discuss and decide social subjects. In our Ladies' journal we treat of subjects of every description, and specially such subjects as tend to the growth and welfare of women. But the most effective of all our institutions is the daily Divine service, where men and women sit together for worship. Right relations, according to our opinion between the two sexes, are most effectively established before the throne of the All-holy God, in the blessed time of devotions, when all

the purest, deepest, and noblest sentiments of the human heart are awakened, and everthing that is vile, worldly, and misleading, is thrown into inactivity.

The distinction of castes in Hindu society has been always recognized as the fruitful source of a hundred other mischievous practices. Its removal, therefore, it has been thought, will be a social reform of the highest importance. Now caste, it will be remembered, originally arose from the principle of the division of labour. Certain occupations were assigned to certain classes of society to be practised hereditarily, without the option being given to change them for others. For centralizing and transmitting technical knowledge and skill; for grouping, binding together, and preserving society in distinctive orders under the control of one ruling class, this arrangement was very good. But the exclusiveness and social tyranny which it has begotten have made it an unmitigated evil. Usage, however, has slowly, removed the rule of distinctive occupations. The Brahman only retains his ancient priestly

office; the other occupations, originally fixed, have been mostly thrown open to, and distributed among all classes promiscuously. The operations of caste may be said to be confined principally in these days (1) to matters of food and drink; (2) to matters of marriage; (3) to the performance of certain domestic ceremonies, notably the ceremony of taking and keeping the sacred thread in the case of Brahmans, and the performance of funeral ceremonies, specially of parents, in all castes. Now it must be admitted that the spread of education has considerably loosened prejudices on the subject of eating and drinking. But eating has been always considered such a luxury that restrictions as to the kind and quality of food, as well as the company with whom it is to be eaten, have long ceased to be very binding except among the most rigidly orthodox. Forbidden food has been eaten by mankind from their earliest ancestry, so therefore that part of the caste system, which has been loosened by English education and English habits, cannot be said to be important. Besides liberty in eating, drinking,

and promiscuous association among young men has gradually produced the evil of drunkenness and moral laxity, which, under the old caste-restrictions, would not have been possible among the better classes. Hence social change here has been anything but an unmixed good.

The Brahmo Somaj has gone to work in this matter in a quite different spirit. From the very beginning there has been preached in that institution the doctrine of man's brotherhood. Perhaps the members did not very well appreciate the importance of the principle they had then adopted. It involved, and has since led to the entire dissolution of the caste-system. It is not easy to follow the successive stages of this development. Equality in religious rights is the undoubted source from which all other equalities spring. The accidental deficiencies of birth and education are unconsciously made up in the ambition to excel in wisdom and purity. The temporary suspension of all differences and inequalities in the oneness of feeling which devotion inspires, causes a fusion of natures that must find some of its counterpart in the ordinary

relations of life. In really sincere worshippers and believers the accidental disunion of circumstances and social grades cannot last long. The levelling within levels everything without. Food partaken together has been a religious ordinance in many countries. And very well may it be. The common support and nourishment of life, partaken together with joy and gratitude when friends meet, or eaten amidst the tears and tender sorrows of parting, directs the soul to the common Source of all that is tender, touching, wholesome and good. The sacramental "bread and wine," spiritually partaken, not only make the master and disciples, but the disciples themselves of one flesh and blood. What caste-distinctions can disturb the harmony of that holy brotherhood? Can man stand against man when God unites them? It is through a process, somewhat like this that the Brahmos, principally at the sacred season of their anniversary, have set aside the restriction which would not allow different castes to dine together. Acting from the liberty which comes from the fulness of the spirit, our church in such matters has set the example of

sobriety and sanctity. Drinking nothing but water, eating nothing but the plainest vegetable food, many Brahmos have practically checked the excesses which the gross secularism of "the education" of the day has created among the rising race. We have retained the controlling restrictions of caste, without caste itself.

For a long time, nay till Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, who is *not* a Brahmin, was installed as the minister of the old Adi Brahmo Somaj in the year 1862, the ministry was always exclusively reserved for Brahmins. The exception was made in Keshub's behalf because of his peculiar eminence of character, and his then-existing great friendship with the chief leader of the institution Devendra Nath. Thus was Brahmin precedence first attacked in the Brahmo Somaj, though since the rupture many have gone back from this advanced position, and appointed for their ministers Brahmins only. In the meanwhile the organization of the Brahmo mission in 1865 by the younger party, gave a fatal blow to Brahmin precedence in the Somaj among the younger party. The missionaries were

young men belonging to different castes who under spontaneous spiritual impulses, and ready for self-sacrifice to any extent, offered themselves, and were selected for their moral and religious progress. The influence of their leader formed and matured their character, and sent them throughout the country as bearers of the good news of a saving religion. Wherever they went, honor was shown to them by Brahmins and non-Brahmins alike, the duty of ministry devolved upon them, the duty of elevating and purifying the souls of their brethren in distant parts of the land. Their precedence has been entirely spiritual, and it has effectually broken through the moral and religious exclusiveness of Brahmins fostered by Hindu casticism. The missionaries are the real leaders of the Brahmo Somaj, and when the ministry they fill is absolutely elective and independent of hereditary distinctions, how can the Somajes, led by their influence, uphold caste? The dietary and priestly distinctions being thus removed, the other more serious restrictions come to be considered. All caste-rules on the subject of marriage are most rigidly

observed everywhere. and in these rules idolatry is of course included. "What shall we do at the time of marrying our children?" Cries the Brahmo, "We cannot cut out idolatry and lose caste, we can get no matches made if we are excommunicated." This difficulty was solved by the marriage of one of Devendra's daughters in 1861. That was the first Brahmo marriage ever celebrated, that is marriage according to theistic rites laid down by the Somaj excluding idol-worship. Brahmos from this time forward were practically taught what to do on the occasion of the marriage of their children. Though subsequently he has receded not a like from his advanced position, too much praise cannot be accorded to Babu Devendra Nath for the courage and faithfulness he displayed in being the first to introduce a marriage-reform out of which so many others have sprung—a reform which may be justly said to have ushered a new era into the history of the Brahmo Somaj. His relatives were bitter against him in this step; he had some fear of the legality of the reform. But in the face of all these discourage-

ments the reformed marriage was celebrated amidst great enthusiasm and rejoicing on the part of the Brahmo community. The proceedings of the marriage were published in the shape of a small pamphlet, and widely distributed. They attracted considerable notice and sympathy from outside. This was a severe blow to caste. But it led to still severer blows. Radical questions of widow marriage and intermarriage were started, whose solution brought about the well-known rupture in the Brahmo Somaj, and caused the secession of the progressive Brahmos. If the restrictions of caste could be so far set aside, why should we not go farther, and celebrate marriages between different classes of the community? If caste restrictions are obnoxious, are not caste-badges equally so? Should the Brahmin retain his sacred thread when he enters the Brahmo Somaj, and specially when he occupies the pulpit? These were questions which the progressive young men in the institution asked in quick succession. The answer to them was furnished by the celebration of the first intermarriage in 1862, and the renunciation of

the sacred thread by the newly-appointed junior minsters whom Devendra Nath had himself selected to fill the pulpit. That venerable man was greatly staggered, and evidently thought that his disciples were going too far. In marrying his daughter, according to reformed rites, he had become unpopular among his own relatives, and shocked the feelings of the Hindu community. The further reforms, if instituted, would end, he believed, in a total alienation of the Brahmo Somaj from popular sympathy. His fears, founded or unfounded, were not so much for his own safety, as for that of the institution whose good name he considered himself justly responsible to protect. He, therefore, showed symptoms of disinclination to proceed, felt suspicious of the ground on which he had been gradually led by the enthusiasm of his youthful colleagues, and drew back in alarm. Men were not wanting about him, who took advantage of his uncertain situation to work upon his mind the conviction that the persons who urged these reforms were actuated more by a selfish desire to achieve distinction than any real progress in the Brahmo

Somaj. He was told that Hindu society had been greatly scandalized by recent events, and that the Brahmo Somaj, if led by the young revolutionists, would end, as Buddhism had ended, in a summary expulsion from the country. Actuated by these fears, yielding to these suggestions, and deeply suspicious of the motives of those very men whom a short time ago he regarded as the very life and support of his movement, Babu Devendra Nath Tagore endeavoured to weed out the new element altogether, and conduct the institution according to the old *regime* so far as social matters were concerned. This meant a retrogression. Babu Devendra Nath went back because he thought he was being tempted to be unfaithful to his own ideal, an essentially Vedantic and Brahminical ideal of the Somaj. The younger party moved forward because their ideal though Hindu, nationally and historically, was universal in spirit, embracing the true and the beneficial in every system of faith and social life. Nor was this all. In the progressive career of reforms they had adopted, they perceived, the certain guidance of Him

whose Spirit breathed life into the Brahmo Somaj amidst apparent death, and truth amidst error and falsehood. Under such circumstances Babu Devendra Nath could no longer work with his young colleagues. He chose to remain with the old party, who have since, to a very great extent, revived the spirit of caste in the Adi Brahmo Somaj. In being compelled to secede the Progressive Brahmos were denounced by their offended brethren as a set of blind agitators, who, indifferent to all spiritual progress and truth, had undertaken to upset the fixed arrangements of society. It was good they were thus denounced. Friendless, young and without means, this hostility of criticism awakened in them feelings of resignation, faith, and prayer of which we have spoken elsewhere, But the more they cultivated habits of self-examination and piety, the more surely they felt the need of purifying their social atmosphere, and removing evil usages. Piety, they found, had no place in the character where truthfulness and strict morality did not rule the daily life Prayerful, devoted, and earnest in their religious•

exercises they were equally earnest and zealous to carry out the reforms they had proposed to themselves. The Brahmins in their midst began to renounce their scared thread. Intermarriages, widow marriages, and marriages on reformed principles began to multiply. The trammels of caste fell away almost unconsciously. The whole system of domestic ceremonies began to be remodelled, and as a community the members of the Brahmo Somaj began to have real position and influence in the country. At the present moment so effectually have they disposed of this formidable difficulty, that the question of caste scarcely arises. The Brahmo Somaj in a remodelled social organization. which attracts men from every part of the country.

Of all institutions in Hindu society, marriage is the most essential and most complicated. It involves a number of other usages, each one of which is exceedingly important in itself. The questions age, of creed, rites and forms of caste, of the degrees of consanguinity, of monogamy and polygamy, of widow celibacy, &c., are

all included at one and the same time in the problem of marriage-reform. In fact the whole constitution of Hindu society, as at present organized, comes to be reconsidered, when you make up your mind to remodel the institution of marriage; and the supreme difficulty stares you in the face that your reform is demonstrably contrary to the law of the land. In spite of this the Brahmos determined to do away with every evil connected with the Hindu marriage system. They removed from their midst the custom of infant weddings. The opinions of the most eminent medical men in the country were taken in the year 187 as to the right marriageable age, and the best suggestions on this point were adopted. The enforced celibacy of widows was a disability as unjustifiable in theory as dangerous in practice. So that too was set aside. Not only was gross idolatry removed from marriage-rites, but all absurdities in form and practice were alike eliminated. Strict monogamy was enforced, and the marriage tie was made inviolable. Marriages between different castes, whenever deemed eligible, were solemnized. The sacred

responsibilities of marriage were explained to the parties bound in wedlock, seriously and effectively, and all foolish expense and unnecessary pomp were excluded as far as desirable. But one terrible difficulty underlay all these reforms. The Brahmo marriage was illegal. The beneficial changes introduced were against the spirit and letter of Hindu law. And this meant the illegitimacy of children, and endless confusion in the descent and inheritance of property. The opinions of the most eminent Sanskritists and lawyers were given to assure the public of the illegality. Public opinion was elicited, and went to prove the same thing. And the Brahmos were therefore compelled to memorialize Government for a legislative enactment "to relieve them from their legal incapacity to contract marriages according to their own ritual." This memorial was strongly opposed by the Hindu community, and still more strongly by the conservative Brahmo party under the leadership of Babu Devendra Nath Tagore. But the Brahmo Marriage Act, after four years of intense

struggle and anxiety, was passed in March 1872. The establishment of the legality of the Brahmo marriage ritual was a small matter compared to the vast social advantages it conferred in other respects. By it polygamy, the terrible evil in Hindu society, against which many eminent men have fought in vain, is rendered impossible in the Brahmo Somaj, the new law making it positively penal. The minimum age of marriageable persons being fixed by law, the obnoxious custom of early marriages is also virtually abolished. Caste is simply ignored by the Act, and men and women of different classes of society can unite themselves in wedlock now with the perfect sanction of law. These reforms, if attempted to be carried out one by one, would take a long time, even if they were ever successful, under existing arrangements. The Brahmo Somaj, in laying the foundations of a new society, has established them as fundamental principles which must be accepted before any one can consistently belong to its reformed organization. All these sufficiently indicate, we hope, the reformsto

which we have directed our attention, and which we have been able, however partially, to bring to a successful termination. There have been about a hundred Brahmo marriages up to this time. The number of intermarriages was thirty-five, and the number of widow marriages was thirty-six up to the year 1879. Marriage being the chief domestic reform among Brahmos, we have not spoken of the other ceremonies. But these also have been reformed, the principal one among them being the *shradh* ceremony in honor of the dead. Any innovation here involves loss of caste, and often gives rise to persecution. But it being contrary to our belief in the future state of existence, we were obliged to alter the *shradh* ceremony from the very beginning. This has, therefore, become comparatively easy, and we have to perform many other ceremonies of different kinds every year. A complete list of our rituals would include (1) Jatkarma, which is the ceremony of thanksgiving after the birth of a child; (2) Namkaran, the ceremony of name-giving when

there is Divine service also ; (3) Marriage ; (4) Funeral ceremonies connected with the cremation of the dead ; (5) shradh, consisting of ceremonies in honor of the dead. It has been our wish for a long time to publish the forms and rites for all these occasions. But for various circumstances we have failed up to this time to do so.

From what has been said above, it will be evident that all the social reforms in which the Brahmo Somaj has engaged itself have been carried out in a strictly religious spirit. In fact they are religious reforms applied to the social needs of our community. They cannot be viewed apart from the spiritual development of the institution. We have never introduced a social reform for the sake of *innovation*. Acting in accordance to the model of Hindu society, and that model is based upon a universal and very important truth, we have so proceeded that our social institutions may secure our religious principles, while those principles regulate and establish the reforms on a safe and permanent footing. A social reform as

such has no vitality in our land. It may be confined to a few individuals, those perhaps who see the convenience of it, and are independent of the opinion and influence of society in general. But the entire organization outside will have little to do with it; it is ruled almost entirely by religious influences, or such influences as stand in the name of religion. The Hindu mind, by some peculiarity in its constitution, will recognize nothing but what bears the sanction of religion. The social reforms that are necessary at the present time on account of the altered circumstances of society must either be carried out under the cover of Hindu orthodoxy, as Pundit Eshwar Chunder Vydasagar has been trying to do, or under the influence of a better and truer system of faith. Those who want the reforms have, generally speaking, lost all belief in orthodox Hinduism, because their education has removed a great many of their erroneous ideas; whereas the religion of the Brahmo Somaj is gradually recommending itself to the mind and the heart of the nation. Nor is that all. In one

form or another that religion is slowly taking the place of Hinduism. The Brahmo Somaj has absorbed the spirit of the ancient Hindu religion, and left to those outside, its dead, dry, and meaningless forms only. The forms besides being meaningless are so narrow and unenlightened that they cannot foster or encourage any healthy change that is foreign to existing customs. To initiate or keep alive a genuine social reform with the help of these customs, and the principles they imply, is to try to walk with the help of a corpse. How can life spring out of death, and truth out of falsehood? True and living reforms can come out of a living religion only. And inasmuch as the faith of the Brahmo Somaj has truth and life in it, social reforms among Hindus can revive in the soil of that institution only. Retaining therefore as much as possible of Hindu usages and institutions, entering into, and truly sympathizing with the spirit of the nation, speaking and acting, so far as desirable, in strict conformity to Hindu ideals of social prosperity gand proress, the leaders of the Brahmo Somaj

are infusing their reforms into the very heart of the nation and rearing up a new Hindu Society. If they remain true and faithful to the end, as we trust, by God's mercy, they shall, it is hoped the regeneration of the Brahmo Somaj will prove the regeneration of the whole Hindu race. Careful on the one hand to protect ourselves from the subtle influences of idolatry, moral dulness, and social stagnation, equally careful on the other hand to guard our movement from the still more subtle influences of a shallow, secular, and godless civilization, faithful to our national instincts and national wants, we have struggled hard to steer all our reforms to the safe harbour of a regenerate social life. How far we have been able to do this, it is not for us to say. It is enough if we can rest satisfied with the thought that Heaven's light will in the end dispel our deficiencies and darkness, and Heaven's grace will ultimately crown our good efforts with success and true progress.

Practical Activities of the Brahmo Somaj.

THE sure index of the progress and prosperity of a popular movement like the Brahmo Somaj is the variety and extent of its practical usefulness. What has been said before will perhaps have convinced the reader that the Brahmo Somaj is a church which can lay some claim to the contribution of religious thought towards the progress of the land. It is our object now to show that in practical activity the Somaj is not deficient. Its work is commensurate with its devotions. We have devoted a few pages to its missionary labours. We shall now say a few words about its general labours. This will show the work in which a great many Brahmo workers are engaged in Calcutta. Each department of work will go under a separate heading. The whole is presided over and guided by Keshub Chunder Sen. He does not interfere with the details, but all the general principles and ultimate

responsibilities lie with him. The whole forms a vast machinery of work with scores of devoted labourers spending annually about twenty-four thousand rupees, and spreading its beneficent usefulness over the whole country.

The Albert Hall and Institute.

The native community in Calcutta had long felt the want of a public hall where they could enjoy literary recreation, and cultivate friendly intercourse with each other. Amid jarring interests, amid political and religious divisions, it had long seemed desirable to provide a place where men of all creeds and colors might, laying aside for a time their mutual differences, mingle with one another in social fellowship. Accordingly, when His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was pleased to honor the metropolis of British India with a visit, there was a general desire on all sides that so important an event should be commemorated by an institution of the nature above referred to. An association, styled the Albert Institute, was formed on the 25th April 1876 to carry out

these objects. The Honorable the Lieutenant-Governor consented to be the patron of the Institute, and a council was organized consisting of a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, to be elected annually, and a Committee of 16 members. It was resolved that there should be a public Hall in connection with the Institute, to be called the Albert Hall, for the following purposes :—(1) Library and newspaper reading ; (2) Lectures and debates on literary and scientific subjects ; (3) Soireés and musical entertainments ; (4) Public Meetings for the promotion of objects of general interest and utility. It seemed to the Institute that there was room in the native part of the town for a public hall and a library, which could be used as a place for literary recreation and social fellowship. A good library containing, besides standard works on general literature and science, a collection of rare and valuable oriental works, and also the principal Reviews and Magazines of the day, would, it was thought, be a powerful instrument of encouraging studious habits amongst the native public.

Bonds of intellectual and social sympathy could also thus be formed.

The Institute invited co-operation and pecuniary help from all the princes and noblemen throughout India, and from the public at large. Within a short time the sum of Rs 25,000 was collected, the Maharaja Holkar heading the list with a donation of Rs. 8,000. This, with the liberal grant of Rs. 5,000, sanctioned by the Government of Bengal, brought the amount up to Rs. 30,000, and was quite ample to enable the Institute to purchase a handsome building in the College Square, which is the educational centre of the city. The building was formally opened in April 1876 under the name of the Albert Hall, by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Richard Temple. His Honor made a speech on the occasion, and exhorted all classes to avail themselves of the career of usefulness ushered in by the Albert Hall. He also expressed his warm sympathy with the project, and held out promises of co-operation on the part of all connected with the Bengal Government.

In accordance with a resolution passed at a general meeting of the members on the 25th April 1877, the Institute was duly registered under Act XXI of 1860. In consequence of unforeseen difficulties the registration was not finally completed till about the close of the year 1879. The Institution was now placed upon a strong legal footing. The Albert Hall has cost nearly Rs 30,000.

The Albert College.

The Albert College was started under the name of the Calcutta School, in the year 1872. The management was undertaken by Babu Krishna Behari Sen, M.A., younger brother of Keshub Chunder Sen, and a distinguished graduate of the Calcutta University, aided by two other educated gentlemen. Unlike other schools and colleges it aimed at introducing amongst the boys certain special objects in addition to the general education required for the purposes of the University examinations. These objects were: (1), moral instructions; (2), the communication of the simple

and elementary truths of science; and (3), the teaching of music. Besides, while in the other institutions, greater attention was paid to the acquirement of the English language, through which knowledge was conveyed, the Albert College took upon itself the task of communicating such knowledge through the vernacular in the lower classes, while in the upper classes English was introduced as the medium of instruction. Under such a system, a student experienced no difficulty in mastering at an early age the details of History, Geography and Mathematics, while he got ample time to pursue his study of English in the higher classes.

The Albert College passed into the management of the Indian Reform Association, presided over by Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, in the year 1873. Since then, it has maintained a career of uniform success and prosperity. The number of pupils in March 1881 was 667, and the maximum number ever attained was 705 in April 1879.

The Albert College has always been encouraged by the good wishes, help, and co-operation

of some of the excellent public-spirited gentlemen of the city. Scholarships have been instituted, prizes and medals given, and facilities offered every way to the growing usefulness and improvement of the institution.

Out of 21 candidates sent up to the Entrance Examination of the University in December 1881, 13 passed.

The financial condition of the College is satisfactory. The total receipts of the year ending March 1881, amounted to Rs. 13,419-12-8, and the disbursements to Rs. 12,018-11-5, the balance in hand being Rs. 1,401,-1-3. The College has always supported itself.

The College was last year affiliated up to the standard of the First Examination in Arts of the Calcutta University.

In connection with the School Department of the College, a Band of Hope, a Juvenile Temperance Society, has been instituted from some time past.

The first attempt in this direction was made in the year 1878, and the manner in which the young men acquitted themselves on the

occasion more than justified similar experiments in future. The fifth gathering of the kind took place in January last. About 200 young men proceeded to the President's house, where an effigy of the demon of drunkenness had been set up, holding banners in their hands and singing temperance songs. There they were entertained with oranges and sweetmeats, and were expected to demolish the monster. The effigy was then seized by the boys and set fire to in the midst of repeated cheers.

Missionary Homes.

The Bhart Asram that was established in 1871, and continued nearly for seven years, was a blessed institution. Spiritually as well as socially it was a great step in advance. In it the relations between men and women approached much nearer to the ideal always held by the Brahmo Somaj in this respect. Truly, the inmates were like brethren and sisters. The efforts made for the education of the other sex were most effective. The devotional gathering every day, and the occasional meetings of the

men and women formed the nucleus of a society based on a new model. They all lived in a most unworldly manner, careless of everything except their spiritual progress. When the time came for the dissolution of this movement in 1878, the higher idea of forming a religious neighbourhood was formed, and hence the construction of homes for the Brahmo missionaries was undertaken. That idea has now been carried out into an accomplished fact. There is a corner of that spacious fine street, known as Upper Circular Road, which, four years ago, presented the sight of a weedy wilderness. At present it is a pretty colony of neat little houses which form a compact well-entrenched neighbourhood called the *Mangal Parab.* Almost all the Brahmo missionaries have their homes here. There are nine such homes. Some of them have been built with the proceeds of the ancestral property of the owners. Others have been built at the expense of the public. One of the missionaries devoted the greater part of his time and energy towards the construction of these buildings. And within the

short period of two years all these houses have reared their heads. The sympathizing public have contributed nearly Rs. 3,000 for this purpose, and subscriptions continue to be given for repairs and improvements. Missionaries, with families, are thus permanently accommodated, and the Brahmo Somaj has secured a lasting shelter for its honored workers. The activity manifested in this matter has been of the highest use both to the public and to the persons benefited.

We have thus got a religious neighbourhood in place of the old Bhart Asram. The families are on terms of mutual independence and equality. Both the men and women almost every day congregate for morning service in the house of the minister. The ladies attend the meetings of the Ladies' Institution, and the weekly service in the Mandir. The boys and girls are sent to the Albert College. Altogether there are the elements of a healthy little community which can perform the experiment of social re-form on a proper scale, and on an independent

footing And the New Dispensation is bound to prove to the world that this all-important experiment of a society founded upon strictly theistic and apostolical principles, is a success in all respects.

Female Improvement.

The female improvement department of the Indian Reform Association was established with the other branches in November 1870, with a view to raise the intellectual, moral, and social status of Hindu women. The practical means adopted for the purpose was the founding of the "Female Normal and Adult School" in February 1871. In the first few months of its career the institution received some pecuniary help from the late lamented Miss Mary Carpenter, but her contribution ceased very soon, and it had to depend upon subscriptions raised from among educated native gentlemen all over the country. The most earnest efforts were made, and public meetings were held at Allahabad, Cawnpore, Lucknow, Etawa, and Agra, &c. Appeals were

put forth, and the response was immediate warm, and generous. The large sum of Rs. 1,500 was raised by these means.

The school opened with 14 pupils of respectable families, and the number rose to 24 at the end of the year, of whom four were unmarried, three widows, and 17 married. A girl school was attached to the institution with a view chiefly to afford means to the pupils of the Normal School to learn the art of teaching. The pupils were regularly examined every month. The first half-yearly and yearly examinations were held with most satisfactory results, as will be found from the recorded opinions of the examiners published in the printed reports of the Indian Reform Association. A literary association, "Bama Hethaishinee Sava," was formed by the pupils of the school under the presidency of Babu K. C. Sen. Meetings were held twice a month, and the subjects discussed were subsequently embodied in the form of essays published in the *Bama Bodbinipatrica* which was the Ladies' Journal.

In the next year, that is 1872, the institution

secured an annual grant of Rs. 2,000 from the Government, and went on year by year with growing and remarkable success for six years, during which the number of pupils varied at the end of each year from 24 to 34, and the standards rose from the Fifth Book of Reading to the works of Addison, Goldsmith, Longfellow, Byron and Shakespeare. The ladies went on making remarkable progress, both in thought and in the power of expression, as will be found from the opinions of the examiners on their essays published in the reports.

The annual distributions of prizes were held with great éclat; and distinguished persons, such as Lord Northbrook, Miss Baring, Sir Richard and Lady Temple, Lady Hobhouse, Lady Napier, and others graced these occasions with their visits. The institution secured the sympathy, and enjoyed the encouragement of the gentry and aristocracy, not only of this country, but of Europe also. The Crown Princess of Prussia was graciously pleased to send presents to the pupils of the Institution. During the period under review six lady teachers were trained, some of whom

are still employed in important educational duties.

In the seventh year of its career, that is in 1878, the Government aid was withdrawn, owing to which, and in consequence of various adverse circumstances, the institution began to decline until it ceased to exist almost altogether. But efforts were always made to keep it up. About this time an association, styled "Arya Nari Sava," was established for grown-up Hindu ladies, in which lectures on various religious, moral, and other subjects were delivered every week. This institution has since been replaced by the Native Ladies' Institution, established in the course of the present year. In 1878 a girl school, called the Metropolitan Female School, was established, which went on through varied fortunes, and has now been attached to the Native Ladies' Institution.

There are weekly lectures in the Native Ladies' Institution on History, Natural Theology. Female Biography, and Natural Philosophy. Standards in English and Bengali have been laid down. It is proposed to hold annual

examinations also. About fifty ladies attend the weekly lectures regularly. A ladies' committee, consisting of English and Hindu ladies of the most distinguished position, has been formed. Large contributions have been received from native gentlemen and noblemen, and the whole undertaking has commenced under very favorable auspices. This Institution, it is hoped, will perform as important functions as those performed by its predecessor, the Adult Female Normal School.

Temperance Work.

Our Temperance movement was established first in the year 1871, and a correspondence with the Government took place, based on the opinions of influential men obtained on the subject of the liquor traffic. But subsequently some of our young men organized themselves into a Band of Hope. Besides the Temperance Journal, which has been issued from a long time under varying names, meetings are occasionally held, and gentlemen, who advocate the principles of the cause, are request-

ed to give lectures, which are generally very well attended. The Band of Hope has a pledge to which hundreds of signatures have been obtained. The society aims not only to establish teetotalism, but to wage war against other forms of immorality which, in the present transition state of society, are making great havoc among the educated and the young. There are yearly processions in connection with the temperance movement, for which large numbers of boys, belonging to the Albert College, are trained. The Temperance Society has a large list of members.

Charity.

The work of charity has been carried on in the Brahmo Somaj from a long time. The whole Province of Lower Bengal has been infested with epidemic fever for many years past. And in connection with our practical work, we have from time to time sent medical aid and advice to places where disease has been prevalent. Of late the charitable work of the Brahmo Somaj has taken the modest form of

relieving immediate distress. Some of our agents visit the hospitals, carrying with them such small conveniences as pieces of cloth or money. The patients are comforted, and sometimes letters are written at their dictation to their friends and relatives at home. Poor respectable families, who cannot beg, and suffer in secret, are sought out and helped with pecuniary assistance. Boys and young men, who from the mofussil come to find opportunities of education, but cannot find means for that purpose, monthly receive such aid as may enable them to pay for their schooling and boarding. Besides this we have sometimes to build or repair huts in hich the powor dwell, who have not the means of keeping them weather-proof. Debts of poor men, who are involved, are sometimes paid. Funeral expenses, in the case of sudden deaths in very poor families, have to be met. The funds for all these purposes are contributed by the general public. When there are marriages in wealthy households, or any other occasions of jubilee, the manager of the work of our charity applies, and sometimes receives liberal responses.

The Brahmo Somaj Mission Office.

This department of our work was established on a regular footing in January 1866. It was the first organization into which the Brahmo Somaj of India ventured itself after the secession. Its chief work has been to support and take care of the families of Brahmo missionaries. The Mission Office has taken charge of almost all these families—feeding, clothing, and housing the men, women, and children. The business of this department has increased continually. It has undertaken and managed to print our books and pamphlets, and to sell them. This yields some income which goes towards the support of the missionary families. It edits our journals which also yield some income. It manages the Bidhan Press, which is the property of the minister, and from the proceeds of which his expenses are met. The Mission Office corresponds with all the Brahmo Somajes in the country, answering their questions, furnishing them with necessary information, and inquiring after their progress and prosperity. All letters to the Brahmo Somaj are received

at the Mission Office. The subscription, and the different kinds of contributions made to the funds of the Brahmo Somaj of India, have to be gathered by the Mission Office. The accounts of all these various parts of the work have to be kept, and published yearly. Hence one of the Brahmo missionaries, Bhai Kanty Chunder Mitter, has devoted all his time and energy to the management of the Mission Office. Its average yearly receipts from all sources amount to about Rs. 12,000. Its average yearly expenses swallow all this income. The Mission Office forms, as it were, the very heart and centre of the Brahmo Somaj, wherefrom its resources spread and circulate in every direction.

The Tract Society.

The Tract Society has been recently established by a number of Brahmo gentlemen, most of whom do not belong to our missionary body. Their object is to publish and sell the sermons, speeches, and writings of the minister, and do all that is necessary to give wide cir-

culation to his sentiments on every subject. They have worked energetically during the last four years, and published two books and many pamphlets besides running some of the old ones through new editions. The *Liberal* and *New Dispensation* journals are under their management. The little society is prosperous in its circumstances, and judicious in the ways and means it adopts for its work. It is a sort of subsidiary agency to the Brahmo Somaj Mission Office. Babu Krishna Behary Sen, M.A., younger brother to the Minister, who is the Rector of the Albert College, is at the head of this society, and his colleagues are as efficient and active as himself.

The Journals.

The literary activity of the Brahmo Somaj of India makes an important manifestation of itself in the number of journals issued by it, both in English and in Bengali. The oldest among these is the *Dharma-tatwa*, which is a weekly religious journal, started in 1866, containing articles, investigations on religious sub-

jects, and news of the Brahmo Somaj. The *New Dispensation* journal is its English counterpart, and gives the spirit and essence of the religion of the Brahmo Somaj. The *Liberal* is a weekly newspaper substituted for the late *Sunday Mirror*, discussing social, moral, and political subjects, and forming the English organ of the Brahmo Somaj of India in all respects. The *Sulav Samachar* is the weekly pice paper, originally started by the Indian Reform Association with the object of educating the masses. It is widely sold, and has a circulation of two to three thousand. The *Parichkarika* is a monthly magazine in Bengali, published for the benefit of the other sex, among whom it has been popular, and some of whom have contributed to its columns from time to time. The *Balak Bandhu* is an illustrated Bengali magazine, issued every month, for the entertainment and instruction of the young of both sexes, by whom it is read with fond eagerness. The *Visha Byree* is a temperance magazine issued by the Band of Hope, and circulated free among the community at large.

Our Books.

In the present age of thought and mental progress no form of work is so well appreciated, and so significant as literary activity. And in this the Church of the New Dispensation distinguishes itself so well that the official report of the Government of Bengal notices in very complimentary terms this department of its activity. In the Selections from the Reports on the Publications issued and registered in the several Provinces of British India during the year 1880, the following paragraph appears under the heading "Religion": "The portion of the Brahmo religious literature, which emanates from the Brahmo Somaj of India, is now displaying a development of a most interesting character. It has become deeper in tone, more catholic in spirit, more conciliatory in its attitude towards other religions, monotheistic or polytheistic, more cosmopolitan in sentiment, more synthetic in aim and purpose. These changes are clearly traceable to the *New Dispensation*, which has, therefore, become a literary power in the country."

There are for sale now in the Brahmo Somaj Mission Office, according to the published list, one hundred and twenty books, some of which are small, and some large. Of these fifty-one are in English, and sixty-nine in Bengali. If on the average we allow to each publication a space of forty pages, these hundred and twenty books will cover six thousand pages. This amount of literature has emanated over and above the contents of our English and Vernacular journals which, including those of our East Bengal Branch, are ten in number. The subjects on which these books have been written include every variety of religious thought, both in prose and poetry. They include tracts, lectures, sermons, general treatises, and elaborate compositions. A Bengali translation of the Koran is being brought out for the first time, in separate numbers. The lives of Sakyamuni, Chaitanya, Dhruba, Pralhad, of remarkable Mahomedan saints and devotees have been already published, and an elaborate life of Jesus in Bengali is soon expected. The sale of these books, amounting nearly to

Rs. 2,000 a year, yields the Mission Office the greater part of its income.

The Brahmo Mandir.

The history of the house of worship is very much like the history of the spirit of the worshipper himself. Eighteen years ago, when the Brahmo Somaj of India was first established, the new band of theists felt the necessity of a place of public worship. But they were without money, and their friends numbered but few. They resolved to appeal to the sympathy of the country, and thus raise funds. The enterprise commenced with a loan of three thousand rupees on the Minister's personal responsibility. Then almost every missionary determined to gather money in the course of his itinerations. Every body paid in his mite. The Brahmo Mandir could then be opened in August 1869. The construction required an outlay of about Rs. 20,000, and the contributions gathered, did not, up to that time, amount to more than half of that sum. It is only very recently that the original debt has been wiped off. What with

the occasional repairs, additions, and fresh accession of land, the expenditure may be very well laid down at Rs. 25,000 or more, besides the monthly establishment of ordinary charges.

Summary.

The charge is sometimes brought and suffered to be laid against the New Dispensation that, owing to recent devotional developments, the practical activity of the Brahmo Somaj has much declined. Though no notice has been taken of this unfounded accusation hitherto, yet the time has come for the public to reflect for a moment on the mighty machinery of the work carried on by the New Dispensation, a work which only, because it does not indulge in noise and ostentation, does not attract the attention it deserves. The educational agencies, embracing a college, and female schools, regularly instruct between six and seven hundred souls. And in this educational work both males and females are included. The journalistic agencies, both in English and the Vernacular, nine in number, spread

our views in every part of the country, and have an average circulation of six to seven thousand. The Albert Hall Institute is a resort and centre of attraction to the Native public, supplying a common ground on which the people exchange their views on every imaginable subject of importance. The Brahmo Mandir weekly gathers a congregation of about three hundred persons who listen with rapt attention to our ministry. Eighteen Brahmo missionary families, containing about seventy souls, are housed, fed, and cared for. The administration of charity embraces every class of society that may happen to need our help. Thousands of our books are sold by the Mission office which, in all its departments, receives and spends large sums of money averaging to about eleven thousand rupees a year, to which we may safely add another thirteen or fourteen thousand belonging to departments not directly under the Mission office. All our missionary and lay workers, who have been entrusted with responsibilities, have to be guided, governed, helped, comforted, and encouraged. Endless internal quarrels have to be decided, and various

minute small details adjusted. Over and above this all new movements, new undertakings, like festivals, processions, theatres, and meetings of all sorts have to be planned and promoted. And then a continued watchfulness has to be kept up that no department of work fails in its appointed mission, and that the New Dispensation ceaselessly moves in its forward course of increasing progress and spirituality. It is the spirit of an all-active, all-supplying Providence alone that has gradually created, supported, and prospered such many-sided activity.

PART III.

The Second Devotional Movement in the Brahmo Somaj.

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A FERVID ever-advancing religious life is not to be satisfied with any foregone attainment. Truth is an eternal search, and endless discovery. The devotional movement which began so soon after the establishment of the Brahmo Somaj of India, and culminated in 1868, which absorbed into itself all the vitality and the genius of the great religion of Bhakti prevalent from one end of India to another, produced spiritual and practical fruit which sufficiently nourished our community for nearly ten years. If the reader will review the events, measures, and institutions which sprang into being from the end of 1865 to the end of 1875, he will find ample cause to be thankful for the work which the Brahmo Somaj of India did, and the way in which it vindicated its separate existence and organization. But the spirit of that movement never allowed to itself satisfaction for the accomplishments of the past, in view of

the gigantic responsibilities lying undischarged in the future. So about the latter part of 1875 fresh developments seemed imminent. The leader observed symptoms of approaching worldliness creep into the movement. Higher planes of personal character and individual progress presented themselves into view. Moral disciplines of a severe order seemed necessary to be established. Physical comforts began to be abjured. *Vairagya*, or renunciation of the world was the constant subject of discourse and precept. First of all the Minister, and then the missionaries, began to cook their own food. Other self-abnegations also, the reports of which at the time greatly agitated the Brahmo community, came into practice. Protests were sent by English friends at home against this ascetic movement. Explanatory epistles and articles appeared. But it was felt on all sides that the character of the Brahmo Somaj movement was assuming a definite and peculiar aspect, somewhat different from the broad, rationalistic, colorless exterior it had maintained for the last forty-five years. People felt a

vivid alarm, but it was allayed by timely explanation. The alarm was allayed but not removed. For, when in the beginning of 1876 there was among us the further development of "a classification of devotees" into the four orders of Yoga, Bhakti, Gyan, and Shaba,* fresh protests poured in again. It was alleged that we were compromising the philosophical comprehensiveness of the Brahmo Somaj by narrow, specific, and technical distinctions. The whole fact of the matter was that our movement, from the region of speculation and prayer, advanced to the great and universal processes of spiritual culture. All the Brahmo missionaries had hitherto partaken of a common doctrinal, ethical, and devotional culture. They were now, according to temperament and tendencies introduced to specific departments and disciplines for training and progress, all along recognized in the world as the appointed mediums of spiritual excellence. The Brahmo Somaj

* *Yoga* is communion with the Spirit God. *Bhakti* is devotional love. *Gyan* is religious knowledge. *Shaba* is service to fellow men.

practically entered into the arena of definite religious culture and discipline. This was a new departure in the history of that movement. And we cannot, therefore, wonder at the consequent alarm and protest. But be it here observed that the culture and the discipline were peculiarly Indian, embracing the grand principles into which the ancient Hindu religion and all religion in general, may be analyzed. Two of the advanced Brahmo missionaries were initiated into the new teaching, one for Yoga, the other for Bhakti. Others again received instructions to qualify themselves for other subjects.

It is necessary to give the reader some idea of what the new teachings were. These will set forth more completely than we can the spirit of the new movement. With that object the following passages have been translated from the Bengali.

To the two Disciples.

"A long while ago you two left the life of worldliness to enter into the life of religion. This day you leave the life of religion mixed

with sin, worldliness, and unreality, for the pure and profound life of unmixed and genuine spirituality. Be initiated in deep *Sadhan* for this purpose. You have not yet beheld your God in due measure. To-day you set out on your way for that region where you will see the great mighty God giving his solemn Dispensation with his own hand. From the first letter to the last of this Dispensation everything is written by God. Nothing of it is by man. Where is the dispensation ? Where is your God ? There, before you in the far distance. When you go there your hearts will be filled with gladness. Bijoy, you as a *Bhakta*, Aghore, you as a *Yogi* go, walk in that direction. . . . You, Bijoy, who are initiated in *Bhakti*, bear in mind that inebriation in God is to be the great condition to which you aspire. And you, Aghore, who are initiated in *Yoga*, you should bear in mind that your aspiration ought to be to commune with your God always, in all places, and under all circumstances, with your eyes shut, as well as with your eyes open. Accept this discipline. There will be some difference between you and those who sit around you. The

message of light that comes through you, they will receive. I too do not accept this initiation. I too will learn from you And may we all finally enter into the same blessedness."

Yoga Teachings.

"O thou learner of *Yoga*, know that true communion is not possible unless thou dost draw within thyself wholly. Draw thy feet close within; and thine ears, and thine eyes, and thy hands also draw within thy soul. Thy feet, folded away from the world without, must tread and travel far into the inner realm of thy being to behold the formless temple of the Spirit God. Thine eyes, sealed to all objects of sight and sense, must re-open within thy soul, and there penetrate deeply into the secrets of communion. And thine ears, O disciple, must be deaf to all sounds around thee, intent only upon hearing the harmony of the spirit world. Thine hands, inactive in all other things, must busily work in serving within the God of thy heart. Thus all thy senses, nay thy whole being, must be absorbed in the profound contemplation of the object of

thy *Yoga.* Yet thou shalt not always tarry within thyself. There must be the reverse process of coming from within to the world outside. The *Yogi* who, bound hand and foot in his soul, ventures not to stray into the fair earth around him, whose eyes dare not look at things in the face, is weak and immature; he has but half accomplished his task. Therefore thou shalt have to come out of thyself into the world again. But is it necessary for this that thou shouldst turn thy back to the God of communion in the soul? In reversing the process of Yoga, must thou also reverse thine attitude towards Him whom, self-contained, thou hast seen? No. Behold him without and behold him within.

Bhakti Teachings.

"O *Bhakti* learner! Know that *Bhakti* is only the true and tender love of the soul. The True, the Good, the Beautiful; these are the three seed-truths of *Bhakti.* These are the three sides of the nature of the Deity; they produce three corresponding sentiments in man's soul one after another; and the three sentiments in their

turn comprehend Divine nature. Reverence for the True; love for the Good; enthusiastic devotion or inebriation in the Beautiful. The real exercise of *Bhakti*, however, ranges between the Good and the Beautiful. These two attributes of God form the basis of *Bhakti*, which grows upon them. Affection or love is the commencement of *Bhakti*, enthusiasm or inebriation is its maturity. Love is the seed, inebriation is the fruit. Love is the infancy, enthusiasm is the youth. But what about moral purity? Is there no morality in the ground of *Bhakti*? Nay; true *Bhakti* is beyond the region of morality and immorality. The *Bhakta* cannot be sinful. It is unnecessary to say that he must be holy. The deep truth of the matter is this: The ground of moral purity must be fully secured before *Bhakti* can begin. Let all sin first go away; let all moral duties be first discharged, and then only can the discipline of *Bhakti* commence. Unless a man's character be thoroughly good, he is unworthy to take up the question of *Bhakti*. But a man's character may be pure in two different ways. Purity may in

some cases be only strict and rigorous self-discipline; in other cases it may be the result of the sweetness and tenderness of the soul. The latter is *Bhakti*. Its very beginning is joy. *Bhakti* grows on the soil of holiness. *Bhakti* comes with colour and beauty in its wings. The outlines of a picture may be correct and good. But as in themselves those outlines are naked, harsh, dry, and incomplete, and when filled in with warm colouring they become alive, soft, and charming; so a man's character may be good and pure, but harsh and charmless, and it is only when he is adorned with the beauty of love, tenderness, and peace that his character acquires its fulness. Mere morality is not enough for *Bhakti*; but immorality makes *Bhakti* impossible. This bear in mind always. It is a most dangerous thing to say that a *Bhakta* can ever be immoral. It is never his custom to say, 'First let me cultivate *Bhakti*, and I shall be pure afterwards.' No. He eschews all sin before he begins *Bhakti*.

"Now let us ask whence springs *Bhakti*. It springs from restlessness. Thou hast faith in God, thou dost faithfully perform all religious exercises;

thou art good to thy neighbours, to thy kinsmen true to all domestic and social relations ; but the heart cries out in the midst of these things, saying, "There is no rest for me in this." Then the Giver of all truth finds it necessary to send a new dispensation. He sees His son hath no rest, and He wants to give him rest. Why should God's son suffer from the deep pain of restlessness in the heart ? Peace is necessary, so is joy, so is love. Therefore the good God sends the dispensation of *Bhakti*. This is the sole reason of the *Bhakti* dispensation, and there is no other."

Our preachers in their tours in the provinces inculcated these new principles and disciplines. The spirit of the development spread, and produced an evident effect upon the devotions, lives, and character of Brahmo worshippers. Physical austerities, severe personal disciplines, gerat simplicity in food and clothing, long courses of meditations, midnight vigils, occasional retirements from the world, were the manifestations. But one thing was plain. The Bhakti movement of 1868, chiefly emphasizing the

Vaishnava characteristic of strong emotional excitement, had enlarged and widened its character, scope, and principles, and imbibed the parallel culture of Yoga (rapt communion.) And thus, by gradual and slow accretions, the full complement of the Hindu religious ideal of piety was practically and definitely formed in the Brahmo Somaj. When towards the latter part of 1875 the first beginnings of the Vairagya practices took place, who expected that they would consummate to such an ideal? But mysterious are the workings of Providence, and they lead man through untrodden paths. These tendencies did not stop here. Next year, 1877, there was a further development still. At the autumnal festival in August another new classification of devotees was effected, the orders extending to the study and culture of religions both Indian and foreign. Unto one man was appointed the study of the Christian scriptures and the cultivation of the spirit of the Christian religion. Another was solemnly called to take up Buddhism and its scriptures as his subject. A third was entrusted

with the study of the Mahomedan religion and writings. And the Hindu religion formed the study and meditation of the fourth. Each one reverently responded to the call, and devoutly pursued his studies, meditations, and prayers. The ordinance reminds us of the sending of the four Brahmins by the old Brahmo Somaj to Benares more than forty years ago to study the four Vedas. As the results of their labours and researches modified the history and principles of the Brahmo Somaj movement, and led to the abolition of the Vedic covenant, so may we say, the researches and meditations of these other four students, in their respective departments, had influence towards the formation of the ideal, which from the next year marked the new epoch through which we are now struggling forward.

The year 1878 began with the agitation of the Cuch Behar marriage. Progress, principle, personal respect and relationship, everything was drowned in the acrimonious controversy. The Brahmo Somaj was threatened with real and serious catastrophe. We all know what

happened. But amidst all this bitterness, disorder, and disruption, the clear and definite principles elaborated during the last three years, were steadily held with iron grip. Amidst all this peacelessness, prayerlessness, blasphemous extravagance, and sacrilegious fanaticism, the sweet, sanctifying, glorious devotions of the past ten years were not only held with regularity, but deepened and matured so as to give adequate consolation against the rage of the heathen, and the vain imaginings of people. Nay more. Leaders and followers, ministers and disciples, all felt that these troublous times were the fit season for once more raising the ideals and altitudes of their religion and their lives. Human praise and human censure they felt were equally misleading. More devoutly than they had ever done, they began to look up to the Lord for counsel and guidance. The doctrine of inspiration daily acquired fresh vividness and force. Beyond the clamours and quarrels of the mad times, they were led to contemplate and feed on the characters and strength of the prophets and pioneers of mankind. The ever

growing faith in Providence and the Divine personality acquired unspeakable tenderness, and gave shape to the conception of God's Motherhood. An intense realization of the sentiments and spirit of a many-sided religion suggested the necessity of ceremonies and sacraments. And the tendencies of the last many years added to these spiritual impulses, struggle, and trials, culminated in the ideal of the New Dispensation. The scriptures of different nations put forth their towering personalities. The devotions of all religions suggested a synthetic discipline. The mystic rites of varying churches struggled to find their interpretation. And the doctrine of direct inspiration made everything an intense reality. Pilgrimages, or the spiritual study of the characters and teachings of great prophets, were enjoined. Enthusiastic missionary expeditions were carried from province to province. And all these together formed that unity of ideal which was proclaimed in the New Dispensation.

The New Dispensation.

IN all countries and among all nations, where-ever there is civilization, and among whom religion has any life, there is at present a decided effort after some broader and more free religious culture. If want and effort mean a change, such change cannot be far distant. Convictions have enlarged and become liberated, ancient orthodoxies have been unhinged, theologies uprooted, assaults on traditional authority have had the most unmistakeable result. New and great aspirations have been awakened for a deeper union between the spirit of man and God, for a deeper insight into the nature, attributes, and relations of the two. The scientific affinities between man and the universe, between reason and faith, the moral relations of opinion and conduct, of private judgment and ecclesiastical authority, the unfitness of ideas and social arrangements, the growing taste and education of communities, have given rise to questions whose

importance cannot be overrated, but whose solution is as far as ever. There is an upheaving spirituality at the bottom of loose social organizations which does not find adequate outlet through the constituted channels of public opinion ; there is a mighty craving for liberty which spends in impetuous and incessant protests against the old and established orders of intellectual, moral, and religious restraint. The revolutionary literature of the last quarter of a century undisguisedly attempts the overthrow of all trust and sanctity, and the establishment of a mindless, soulless materialism, that will leave man nothing higher than his animal nature. On the other hand the desperate struggles of religious men to revive the age of unreasoning faith, and exploded superstitions, promise to make religion the most retrograde and demoralizing pursuit of the present century. There is nothing certain, nothing stable, no true progress in anything, no real advance in thought, belief, or practice. Unquestionably something is wanted to set these angry conflicts at rest, or if rest be not possible, to indicate the

way in which tempest-tossed humanity may proceed in some hope of a harbour. Some reconciliation is inevitable, even if that be but very incomplete at present. Some revival of the old order is indispensable. Some reconciliation is wanted of the normal relations between theology and philosophy, between ethics and spirituality, between social, secular, and ecclesiastical organizations, between faith, liberty, authority, science, between prophets, scriptures, sacraments, cults and disciplines. Significantly enough every important religion points to such a revival at no distant time. The Christian churches cannot for ever remain so disunited in tendency and aim as at present. A general influx of light and life must bring them together some day, swallow their minor differences, and unite them into a wider, all-embracing power that will really avail to introduce a higher and holier civilization into the world than is now found. There is such profound vitality in Christianity still left that it cannot but combine the warring elements that act in opposition under its general name and

influence, and whatever form the combination may take, and whenever it may happen, it will surely be characterized by a broader humanity, a more catholic church-organization, a more refined spirituality, a purer and diviner reason, a higher and more catholic morality, and a deeper and more genuine faith, worship, and ordinance. Hinduism almost as plainly indicates an approaching revival in which the varied developments of Aryan spirituality in India, so seldom gathered in a large-hearted synthesis, and united into a general system, will present a type of religion suited to the growing education and national instincts of the people, and calculated to remove the idolatry and errors of which the land is full. The constantly increasing attention that is being paid to Buddhism in Europe and this country, and the increasing admiration with which the sublime morality, and the marvellous humanity of Sakya Muni are regarded by unprejudiced men and influential reformers, also point to a sure revival of Buddhistic principles and practices, if not Buddhistic faith, at no distant day. Even Mahomedanism

promises a reform and revival. The estimates of life and character of the Arabian prophet have begun to be modified considerably by enlightened. Mahomedan scholars, and the impartial outside public. The principles of orthodox Mahomedanism will be surely recast as greater light of knowledge and humanity is thrown on them by research and meditation, and the genius of the age which silently acts upon every creed. We may expect to look for revived and refined Mahomedanism if only the leaders of the world's thought and piety will be more just, and take a more cordial interest in the Mahomedan races of the world. Nor are such indications of revival confined to religion only. We fervently believe that after the pendulum of sceptical and materialistic thought has swung to its utmost stretch of license, a reaction is sure to set in. Such reactions have been anything but unknown in the history of knowledge and thought. The present age will form no exception to other ages, and the laws of human progress must obey their unvarying order. After the rights of the physical world have been vindicated, the laws of

the spirit shali assert themselves, and the cycles of the advancement of truth must, once more, bring in the age of spiritual reality and revival. Faith, worship, self-sacrifice, holiness, contemplation, and the highest humanity shall regain their sway. And such a change, introduced not through bigots and sectaries, but through the agency of the pioneers of knowledge and philosophy, shall conquer doubt and materialism. Science shall subdue science, and philosophy shall conquer philosophy. The world is not unfamiliar with the sight of devout and reverent philosophers who, by higher methods of observation, experience, and spirituality, have dispelled the theories of the unfaithful apostles of false knowledge—men that in trying to be faithful to one department of creation have been almost deliberately blind to what is deepest in human nature. Yes, science and philosophy are as much destined to revival and reformation as any system of religion. And such a revival, when it comes, shall add tenfold to the force and importance of other revivals whereof faint indications are found on

every side. The sum of these revivals will constitute a nobler and more glorious age of progress both of philosophy and faith than has yet been observed. This will be a New Dispensation indeed, a veritable Kingdom of Heaven. But what power of human intellect and organization, what breadth of human excellence and philanthrophy, whose genius, and what combination can anticipate and work out such an epoch of glory? What man, what community, nay even what nation, can by thinking and human energy, bring about the universal exaltation of the soul, mind, and conscience? It is only the eternal and infinite purposes of an all-wise Providence, it is only the miracle-working arm of the Almighty that can work such marvels. The Brahmo Somaj of India, in fervent and absolute faith in that Providence, has hitherto laboured in this direction. In full remembrance of its mission and responsibilities, the Brahmo Somaj devoutly believes that by the inspiring influence of Everlasting Truth, it has received its share of that grand Dispensation which shall, in due time, bring the reconciliation

and revival of all dispensations of truth, in every department of human thought and faith, whenever, and wherever given, and thus usher in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The religion of the Brahmo Somaj is called a *Dispensation*, because the Brahmos have not *made* their religion; it was dispensed to them by One who at once can understand human wants, and satisfy them from the fulness of His mercy and truth. The religion of the Brahmos has been *revealed* to them, has been given to them as healing medicines are given to the sick and dying, as needful and saving alms are given to the poor and to the famished. It is *dispensed* out of the free bounties of Heaven, according to the sufferings and sorrows of the land where we live. It is dispensed according to the needs and tendencies of the age in which our lots are cast. It is dispensed to us not by reason of our intellect, or our deliberations, or the strength of our motive or feeling, but through all these things, and sometimes in spite of them, by God alone. It is given to the Brahmo Somaj at the rarest seasons of devotional activity, and spiritual

depth, as a divine response to our heart-felt prayers amidst the utmost crises of danger, tribulation, and unpopularity. It is a dispensation, because the religion of the Brahmo Somaj is a *Revelation* and not a theology. At different times different religions have arisen to influence the destinies of mankind. These sprang from small beginnings, and did not create many expectations at their rise, but Providence brought out mighty results from the deep principles which they involved. The Brahmo Somaj is such an institution. Few, who are outside, know the depth and strength of faith which the Brahmo Somaj has in its own mission. It is impossible for the great religious public of the world to trifle with it. Hostile critics, who may be numbered by hundreds, and whose ability and influence are not of a mean order, cannot dispose of it so easily as they wish. The history and the operations of our church may not have been very magnificent, and our leaders, missionaries, and adherents may not be men of the very highest order. But we can say that in our history, from the very beginning,

the hand of a special Providence has been clearly manifest; that our principles and our operations have influenced the country in which we live, and have elicited great response in other lands also; and that our leaders and missionaries have special and singular aptitude for the work they have undertaken. Nay more. We have not now a doubt in our minds that the religion of the Brahmo Somaj will be the religion of India, yea of the whole world, and that those who really care for God, for piety, for purity, for human brotherhood, for salvation, and for eternal life, shall have, in one way or another, under one name or another, to accept the faith and the spirit that a merciful God is perpetually pouring into the constitution of our church. Far be it from us to boast or speak in self-laudation. We simply express the fulness of our faith. If we had been the authors of our own religion, if our church had been the result of the wisdom and deliberations of men, the achievement of the cleverest and the best in the land, we would have felt some fear and scruple about its future influence in the world;

but the ground on which we base our trust and hope is very different. Our church, humble as it is, has been founded and organized, maintained and kept alive, by the living and eternal Providence of God. We deserve no credit for its existence, fot its success, for its influence, for the sympathy and honor with which it is treated by some of the greatest and best in all lands. Neither do we deserve any discredit for the singularities, accidents, and dangers that have befallen the Somaj at times. It is the doing of Him who at all times has done marvellous things to draw men's hearts to himself and his truth. We have seen his hand too often, and we have perceived his strong purposes too clearly not to bear witness to the great cause he has committed to our care. The religion of the Brahmo Somaj, though not yet complete, nay though yet at its very commencement, is a divine dispensation of truth, in the same sense as other great religions of the world have been. We deliberately and after long thought announce it as a Dispensation, as the New Dispensation. We do not hesitate

to do this because we feel perfectly sure we are declaring the will and the purpose of the Almighty. Nor is *our* faith, however strong and clear it be, that is our only guarantee for making this declaration. We are prepared to give reasons for our faith. It is not true because *we believe* in it, but because *it is true* therefore do we believe in it. We believe in it because it removes our sins, wants, sufferings ; because it has reconciled us to all other religious dispensations ; because it is reviving in our church the primitive virtues of genuine faith and devotion ; because science, philosophy, worship, energy and activity are combined in it with personal sanctity, private self-sacrifice, and pious joy. If this declaration cannot recommend itself to the good and faithful by its own principles, and on its own merits, let it not be accepted. But if the New Dispensation of the Brahmo Somaj can show foundations that are independent of the mere faith and enthusiasm of its present adherents, let men pause and examine it, and if the Indwelling Spirit in these things influence

their wills and understandings, let them accept and admit the divine claims of the simple Theism which it proclaims. As for ourselves we only trust and pray that we may be enabled to set forth our experiences and convictions with adequate humility and firmness; that we may conceal nothing, exaggerate nothing; and without fear and presumption give such a plain honest statement as the great interests of truth demand from us. Faithful witnesses of the truth, honest believers in Divine dealings, our simple duty is to try to interpret to the world such experiences and revelations as have been given to us regarding the religion of the Brahmo Somaj, the future religion of India, and of the world. So help us God.

A great deal of dissatisfaction is felt at the use of the phrase New Dispensation. Why the religion of the Brahmo Somaj should be called a Dispensation we have seen; but why should it be qualified as new? Brahmos have been often heard to say that their faith has come down from a remote antiquity. Its great recommendation is that it is not *new*. It is the most precious

and ancient bequest made by uncounted generations to an age of unreason and unspirituality. To call it *new* is to take away from the religion of the Brahmo Somaj its chief and most popular virtue. If it is new who has created it, when was it created, whom does it include, whom does it reject? Why should the phrase "new dispensation" be adopted when it is so misunderstood and so mystifying? Questions such as these, and many more, rise in the minds of not a few who, on the whole, are not disinclined to do justice to the leaders of the Brahmo Somaj of India. But such doubts, if not speedily removed, are likely to harden into real hostility to the present progress and future destiny of a great movement, and lock the source of sympathies without which Brahmos cannot be bound into a growing brotherhood.

The religion of the Brahmo Somaj is called *new*, not because the truths which it embodies are new creations, and had never been before. Every truth is ancient, uncreate, and existed before Abraham was. At various times, and by various prophets has Eternal Truth sent

glimpses of His nature and purposes to the world, and the great dispensations of religion bear testimony in the revelations of everlasting realities vouchsafed through them. Yet these realities have been always presented in new light, and new spirit. The bearings and relations of every great truth are incalculable and endless. They can be applied to infinite varieties of human condition and consciousness. They are ever old and ever new. Ever old in reference to the past, ever new in their application to the present and the eternal future. Man's faith, breathed upon by the Holy Spirit, flashes out with a new light and spirit amidst which the most ancient realities are revealed in meaning and relation hitherto unknown. Depths of life, spheres of activity, and aspiration, are discovered that open out new careers, and new epochs of progress. New vitality shoots out of the old eternal foundations of religion. And though the most ancient of all things, truth is born, revealed, and recognized anew. No other word, except the word New, can be used to express it. It is the law

of development applied to spiritual things. Buddhism was but the development and revival of Hindu spirituality in a new spirit of ethical purity. Christianity was the development and revival of the highest form of Hebrew theism, in a new and hitherto unknown spirit of love and faith. Mahomedanism was a further development, in an Arab and Ishmailite type, of the religion of Abraham, in an uncompromising spirit of monotheistic strictness new and unknown before. It would be exceedingly difficult to point out what was *new* in these religions when they were preached, yet they were most undeniably "New Dispensations" in their origin and career. Similarly the Divine Spirit, ancient and eternal, He who is the Spirit of the age, the Lord of humanity, acting upon all the great religions of the world, upon all human needs, instincts, and aspirations, evolves an order of faith which breathes a new spirit, and a new birth into everything. And this faith is the simple pure Theism of the Brahmo Somaj. It brings before us new views of God's nature and attributes; new views of the soul's relations

to him ; new aspirations in the nature of man ; new reconciliations of religious difficulties, and of the scriptures, prophets, and sacraments of all nations. And for such reasons as these the religion of the Brahmo Somaj is called the *New Dispensation.*

The Doctrine of Inspiration.

WHY should we look to the past only for divine revelation, and invest the warm vivid present with barren spiritual death?

To Brahmos, and to all really prayerful men, the worship of the past is dishonor to God. If to man, God is real, he is a Present Reality, not transmitted by the experience of foregone ages, but living, immanent, active, now, and here, within every one of us. If to man God has worked any miracle, his wonderful actions are not to be sought in the pages of history, in the extraordinary feats which some men are said to have achieved, or in the disorders of natural law, but in those ever-memorable acts of Providence which every religious man remembers, either in the sacred experiences of his own life, or in the career of others with whom he has associated. If God speaks at all, he has spoken to you, in response to your weeping appeals when the whole world refused peace and comfort. How can the man that knows not the voice of His

Father who is by his side always, recognize the echo of Divine utterances from a vast distance of time and space? How can the man, who is blind to the Living Hand that hourly weaves around him the web of facts and events, know the obscured fingers that moved over the face of buried centuries? To banish God into the gloom of history is only next to banishing him out of the heart, and out of the creation altogether. To deny him the power of offering living, real, and ready inspiration, is one step removed from utter atheism. Alas! how many men, apparently devout, are guilty of this secret atheism! No man's faith is safe unless he can recount to himself the undoubted instances of God's profound and living action within his spirit, unless he can still hear that Voice calling out to him, leading, helping, and giving hope and light in every difficulty, moral, physical, spiritual, such as no man can give. No church is safe whose career is not based upon crowning acts of God's special providence, upon recurring and startling divine dispensations whose current embraces its past, present, and eternal

future. The greatest discipline of a religious life lies not in a blind recognition of doctrine, in a dead allegiance to opinions and fancies, but in the felt and conscious reality of God's ever active dealings in individual history, and in the history of the church and household of God.

Even in the present day, amidst so much carnality, irreligion, and mock-religion, the fire of inspiration burns in the true soul. No amount of rationalistic blindness, or materialistic doubt can quench that fire. There are men who still feel they are born with a great purpose of God's service. For this purpose they struggle, they pray, they seek for Heaven's light. And that for which they wait they amply receive. The great belief in the Brahmo Somaj is that prayer brings an immediate, infallible response. We have not to sleep for centuries before God grants us the object of our daily supplications. Prayer would be a dreary, desolate, lifeless duty in that case. Prayer is but the breath of the soul. No routine, no ritual, no recitation, no intonation, word, or poetry, can measure the depth of the sighing prayerful soul. The true breath of

prayer is neither uttered nor heard, nor shaped, nor sounded, but poured as a sigh into the bosom of the Infinite. Our wants are deeper, our sorrows are more secret than we know. Only the Spirit that searcheth the heart knoweth them. We can but look up to Him in silent pain, breathe the sigh of the heart's want and poverty, and remain still. We can but wait and watch with the lamp of faith steadily burning in our soul. And the response surely comes. How does he respond to the breath of prayer poured into his bosom? By his own breath. The outgoing breath of prayer, and incoming breath of Divine response constitute the life of the soul. And the breath of the Holy Spirit is Inspiration. Inspiration is the touch, the look, the breath, the silent language of the Hearer of prayers. It comes as a sudden direction, as an impulse, as a great thought, as an event, a circumstance, as an unlooked-for situation. But the devout man feels it comes to him, and he does not create it. It suggests an original line of action to him, an unbeaten, untrodden, unique path. Inspiration was never soft-spoken, or mealy-mouthed, or

anxious to please. It is received in vernacular, and delivered in vernacular. Inspiration is the universal vernacular which is understood by the inspired in all ages, and agreed in by common instinct and usage. Does God speak in thunder and lightning, roars he in storm, or in the crushing surge of the sea? The noise of the mighty elements is hushed in the majesty of his presence. Our scriptures say, He is eternal silence. Our Aryan forefathers went in search of the Infinite into the silent Himalayas, into the solemn quietness of the primeval forests, on the hushed lonely banks of our great rivers. In silent devotions, in solemn noiseless meditation, in the stillness of the awe-struck soul, they found the eternally silent God. Can the feeble miserable lisping of humanity belong to the Holy of Holies? The uproar of all the elements ceases before the approach of his spirit, and what is human speech that He should utter it! He uttereth spirit, he breatheth fire, his guidance is a sword, his look is a battle-beacon on the hill-top. His breathing fills the whole heart, soul, and body, the whole brains, and the whole being. And

hence the inspired man is like unto a madman. But certainly there are degrees in inspiration and stages, and every prayer does not bring down the same amount of response. It is measured by the extent and amount of faith, love, self-surrender in prayer and spiritual exercise. All men are inspired at times, though some are inspired for special purposes. And there are degrees in inspiration though the kind is very much the same. Besides inspiration has its tests. Inspiration is known, like the flood of great rivers, by the deposits it leaves behind for noble harvests to grow. The high tide of inspiration does not always or equally last. There is no knowing how or when it comes, how or whither it goes. But it is certain it fills and fructifies the recipient's life and soul with the harvests of heavenly realities. The test of inspiration is increased holiness of character. Wiser love, deeper forgiveness, intenser peace, and sweeter temper, testify true inspiration. Inspiration is verified by the reception, perception, and assimilation of divine truths, unknown before, or known only

in name. Pure doctrines, intense devotions, and the sanctities of character follow. The flood tide of the waters of grace thus scatters blessed abundance over the whole area of human nature. We have said inspiration does not last for ever, though it may often come. It comes as it is wanted. There are fixed laws and seasons for the flood of the spirit, and the breath of the Supreme Spirit bloweth upon it as he listeth. His breathing produces an upheaval of all the faculties, of all the feelings, and capabilities of our nature. The whole nature of the man is aroused and overstrained. Every power in the mind is raised to its utmost pitch. The devotee can now see what he cannot see at other times, and he hears what he cannot hear at other times. The gift of prophetic vision is given to him. The gift of hearing prophetic commandments is given to him. This is the doctrine of Adesh or Inspiration. The tide goes down, and life resumes its equilibrium. But the overflow of divine beauty and purpose in the heart leaves a vast deposit of wisdom, holiness, spirituality, and all that is excellent

in character. It is from this process of inspiration and grace that all right doctrines, all exalted orders of spirituality, all grand conceptions of God are formed. It is thus only that year after year our doctrines are accumulating, our ideas are gaining in depth and in spirit, our institutions are multiplying in number and usefulness, and our position is becoming recognized in the spiritual world. Our progress in every department is but the result of the overflow of the spirit in our church. In all churches, in all ages, true doctrines and real advancement are but the consequences of true inspiration. And inspiration comes only when the Spirit of the Eternal is present with a Dispensation, hearing the ceaseless prayers of its devotees, and answers them with the blessed revelations of His nature and purposes.

Prophets.

STRANGE that men, apparently earnest in the search of spiritual blessedness, should fail to behold the marvellous significance of the great lights of human character. Strange that men seeking God should be blind to his amazing self-revelation in the highest humanity. We never held that prophets were other than human. Their supreme humanity, their spiritual heroism, their unearthly sanctity, their unexampled love, forgiveness, and wisdom constitute their claim to our revering faith. Divinity is in them visible in the mighty virtues which beam and burst out of their character. It is impossible for any free earnest devout spirit striving and crying for the inner light not to pause before the examples and ideals left behind by them, and find in them the fragments of the full effulgence. It is unnatural not to feel an ardent yearning after the beautiful excellence of their character. The world shows no other lights but these towards the attainment of the unattainable. And who can there be so dull and dead in spirit as

not to recognize these great characters as elder brothers of the human family? But this recognition may be intellectual or spiritual. It has very little to do with religion if a man rests content with perceiving that Socrates abounded in wisdom, and Luther was undaunted in the service of truth. There are only a very few in these days who can be blind to the lofty spiritual genius of a Paul, or a Sakya Muni. We do not mean to inculcate this sort of intellectual recognition. When we speak of prophets we mean spiritual assimilation. In these prophets we see unmistakably what God wants not merely to know, but *to be.* To be devotional is to be like Jesus when he went up to the mountains to pray. To be spiritual is to be like Paul, dying to the flesh absolutely, and living in God. It necessitates that continued, whole-souled life-devoted discipline which may convert a man to the nature of Jesus or Paul. Yet Jesus and Paul can be realized in the genuine spirituality of their character only when the Holy Spirit of God hath revealed them in the heart of the devout seeker. The spiritual

recognition of our relations with the prophets is only possible by Divine grace, as the result of much prayer and devout aspiration. To us it is not the prophet who reveals God, but God who reveals the prophet. When our supplications for salvation and sanctity to the Eternal throne have been ceaseless and earnest, it is then that the vision is vouchsafed to us to discern the great Prophetic lights whereby we are to walk to the far country of our pilgrimage. This is different from the cold shallow intellectual discernment which rests satisfied with stating that the true calendar of saints is more encyclopedic than is commonly held. The significance of prophetic lives is not merely biographical or theological, but personal and practical. Spiritual life would be a trackless ocean, full of insidious dangers without the loadstar and compass of prophetic guidance. We have to cultivate every-day relations with the prophets, receive every-day help from them, make constant communion with them in our daily devotions. All genuine spiritual life is the resurrection of the prophets. Prophetic charac-

ter never dies, but is perpetually reproduced in the character of the faithful servants of God. The Spirit of spirits lives in each soul as the essence and embodiment of every form of spirituality which his messiahs lived to establish. The prophets can never be comprehended apart from God, and God can never be comprehended apart from his prophets. He makes his abode with the mysterious circle of his kindred spirits. Every prophet is a spiritual phase. Every prophet is a stage in the onward path to the Eternal. Every prophet is an everlasting consolation, an attained home, a sure promise of eternal life. Each prophet is different from the rest, yet not one of them can be disregarded with impunity. All of them together make up the heaven in which the human soul lives here, and hopes to live hereafter.

The doctrine of prophets has been long prevalent in the Brahmo Somaj. So early as the year 1866 Keshub gave his lecture on "Great Men" to supplement what he had said on "Jesus Christ Europe and Asia." The true prophet he said "is 'a God-man.' He is an 'incarnation' of

God. . . . True incarnation is not, as popular theology defines it, the absolute perfection of the divine nature, embodied in mortal form; it is not the God of the universe putting on a human body,—the infinite becoming finite in space and time, in intelligence and power. It simply means God manifest in humanity;—not God made man, but God *in* man."

For the last eighteen years this doctrine has influenced the faith and conduct of the Indian community. During the great Bhakti revival, of which we have spoken, it became fuller and more practically applicate to devotional as well as daily life. But since the introduction of the New Dispensation, it has become one of the few regulating principles of our spiritual life. Communion with the prophets has formed one department of our devotional culture; it has found the way to our hymns. It has given vividness and compactness to our faith in Immortal Life. It has regulated our personal and domestic habits. It has defined the attitude of our religion to all foregone dispensations. The prophets are to us invaluable

realites upon which our daily lives are nourished. They interpret to us pure primitive spirituality before it was contaminated with the shallow hypocritical refinements of modern civilization and formalism. The original, strong, unmixed currents of devotional ecstacy to which we may resort amidst all the clamorous carnality of the age, lie hidden in the depths of prophetic lives.

The Doctrine of Pilgrimages.

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WHAT has been said of prophets will facilitate our idea of pilgrimages. Much needless misunderstanding has been fomented on this subject. The doctrine of pilgrimages embodies nothing more than an order of spiritual culture. The pilgrimages were instituted in February 1880, and completed in October.

The first pilgrimage was made to Moses. The second was to Socrates. The third to the Jogis and Munis of India. The fourth was to Sakya Muni. The fifth was to Jesus. The sixth was to Mahomet. The seventh was to Chaitanya. The eighth was to the great scientific geniuses of the world. Moses represents the direct guidance of God in all the great and minor emergencies of life. Socrates represents self-knowledge. The Jogis and Munis of this country represent the devotional habits of communion and meditation. Sakya Muni is the emblem of self-denial, humanity, and peace. Jesus exemplifies spirituality, faith, love of man, and obedience to the will of God.

Mahomet signalized himself by his rigid monotheism, and the enthusiastic propagation of his faith. Chaitanya, the prophet of Nuddea, was the incarnation of the rapturous love of God. The scientific geniuses of the world are the priests of nature who have disclosed unto us the deep purposes and wonderful intelligence of the Creator. All these names, it will be plain, stand for the profound and essential principles of religious life, which the Brahmo Somaj has, for long years, studied, cultivated, and earnestly laboured to realize and carry out. Nowhere can these principles, in any abstract form of sermon, or thought, or precept, be viewed in that concentrated and concrete light which the great exemplars themselves present. And no culture of religious ideal can be real and effective until it incorporates us with the genius of the man whose special vocation has been to set forth that ideal in life and death. Hence the loyalty of religious sectaries to the respective founders of their sects is so well accounted for. It is an inevitable necessity. In going to adopt and assimilate the great spiritual ideals enumerated

in the names of the prophets mentioned above, the leading spirits in the Brahmo Somaj found they must set apart stated periods of time in which to devote themselves exclusively to prayer and communion in order that they may be inspired to imbibe the distinctive principles at the fountain-head of prophetic personalities in and by whom those principles were first revealed. The process aims as it were at the transformation of a lower character into a higher. Such devotion, prayer, spiritual discipline necessary for this definite and exclusive object, has been, by a justifiable metaphor, called "Pilgrimage." It is like travelling away from our immediate surroundings of time, teaching, and influence to the calmness of prophetic antiquity, and there, far from the petty disturbances of the present, to sit at the feet of colossal souls, and learn from them, under the guidance of the Spirit who presides over all time and all aspirations, the sublime truths sent to mankind from behind the centuries, and by us so soon, so unwisely forgotten. Why so much objection should be taken to such a simple process of

spiritual exercise is more than we can explain, unless it be that the use of the word "pilgrimage" sounds old-fashioned and misleading to some refined ears. If there be any harm in these pilgrimages, that harm belongs equally well to the whole system of our religion which honors all prophets and all scriptures, and aims at that spiritual synthesis which is another name for the reconciliation of the opposing faiths of mankind. But such harm is unavoidable by the constitution of the Brahmo Somaj.

The very first pilgrimage to Moses was started by the utterance of the following benedictions :—

Blessed are they who honor and love the prophets and seers of ancient times.

Blessed are they who believe that though these prophets have departed and are now in heaven, true believers in the world may commune with them in spirit.

Blessed are they who do not ascribe omnipresence or omniscience to these prophets, yet can cultivate their fellowship in their own hearts.

Blessed are they who love to associate with the prophets of all religions, and seek to gather at the feet of each the peculiar ideas he has to teach.

Blessed are they who do not deify prophets, but treat them as their elders in heaven.

Blessed are they who do not care to see prophets clothed in flesh, in dreams and visions, or with the eye of

imagination, but realize them as disembodied spirits in their own souls.

Blessed are they who, instead of seeing God through prophets, behold prophets and saints through the Lord their mediator.

Blessed are they who realize the nearness of heaven's saints, not in space, but in spiritual kinship and affinity of faith and character.

In explanation of the pilgrimage to Moses we subjoin what we wrote at the time :—Not by moving from land to land in quest of a sacred stream or mount does a man perform the real act of pilgrimage. Not by walking many miles, or by bathing, or by the offering of flowers or gold does a man fulfil the object of real pilgrimage. He is a true pilgrim who travels in spirit, and in search of the spirit-land; who seeks for the promised country within the heart, where the true Brindaban is, and to which Christ pointed as the Kingdom of Heaven. There is an Egypt inside the breast where the children of the chosen people are bondsmen still, bound in slavery to a despot worse and more ungodly than Pharaoh himself. The name of this despot is Self. There are taskmasters, more cruel than those who worked the Hebrews of old, who make us labor hard all day

and night, and oblige us to make bricks without straw, and reward us with stripes after the work is done. The names of those task-masters are a legion; we may in short call them falsehoods, passions, doubts, and despair. From the land of Self, from usages, habits, associations, friends and relations that enslave us more and more to the inhuman Pharoah, who knoweth not the Lord, and doth not want to obey Him, from evil task-masters who reward us with stripes for a life-long service, the men and women of the chosen people are to make a pilgrimage to the holy and promised land, the spiritual Canaan that overfloweth with milk and honey. Yea, the pilgrimage has already commenced. These many years have we walked through the dreary desert with our wives and children, with our furnitures and cattle. We have often rebelled and often disobeyed, we have often clamoured for meat, drink, and comfort, and found grievous fault with our leaders.

Now the Lord hath shown us marvels, and taken us safely through sand and sea; the Lord hath fed us with manna, and, like a pillar of

cloud and fire, hath gone before us day and night. Who among us can deny the bounties of the Lord? Now the holy mountain of Sinai, the elevated region of living communion and vision, covered with the glory of God, like a devouring fire, stands before us. In our onward pilgrimage we must ascend it in spirit, we must stand there and wait for forty days and nights if need be, and receive the commands and communications without which further journey seems well-nigh impracticable. On that holy mountain the spirit of Moses must carry us, carry us to the inspiration which that great prophet himself enjoyed, to that favor and that presence which shone upon him, and upon those whom he led. To us the Lord must cry, as he cried to Moses: 'My presence shall go forth with thee, and I will give thee rest.' We must have in our onward pilgrimage those commandments, those laws, those directions, that detailed and every-day guidance in everything without which we cannot be the people of God, nor live in the holy land of promise. We must be prepared to change everything, even our

modes of eating, drinking, and dress, our abodes, and our neighbourhoods for the sake of our glorious Lord's pleasure. We must consent to have new relations, new institutions, new usages, new forms, new ideas, new images, new sacrifices—in fact, we must be prepared for a New Dispensation altogether. But will the New Dispensation unhinduize us? Will it defeat and bring to nought older dispensations? No. On the contrary, all old things will be revived in the new. From the Pisgah of our festival, this land appears in its brightness, as a land overflowing with all that is good and handsome. Our pilgrimage is to that land. Let all of us be pilgrims there, with our wives and children, let us seek that guidance which Moses obtained, let us have the faith and patience which he taught his people to have.

Similar explanations and similar processes were adopted in succession in the cases of all those to whom pilgrimages were afterwards made. It is impossible to urge against the practice any reasonable objection. The whole

thing is an archaic method of spiritual culture of ideals on the subject of religious and moral excellence presented by the greatest geniuses of the world. The form of culture is now no longer retained, but the spirit is retained in daily devotions and occasions of festival. The New Dispensation by this process takes the utmost advantage of prophetic life and teaching as contained by every scripture, without running into all the extravagance and superstition which the worship of the dead inculcates.

Sacraments and Ceremonies.

WHEN religion spreads its roots deep into the soil of human nature, draws its inner moisture, and eats of its fatness, we see significant signs of the process. Religion throws out flowers and foliage. These flowers and foliage of religious life take the various forms and hues of mystic ceremonialism. The rights and sacraments of a faith are the sure unavoidable outcome of its vitality. In the decadence of spiritual existence there is indeed a stage when a falling church artificially rests its weary weight upon the forms and rites of a by-gone age, thus to simulate a vitality which it no longer possesses. But even these borrowed resources of moribund ritualism indicate, like the artificial adornments of an old man, that he had once enjoyed the gifts of a healthy and vigorous youth which now has passed away. We have always held with Professor Max Muller that a religion, in its outer manifestations, is always a struggle to express the inexpressible. When the searching, praying, awe-struck spirit hath made its pilgrim-

age into the eternal depths, and beheld the magnitude of its own relations with the obscure Infinite, it feels a strange travail to give utterance to its swelling conceptions. It pronounces itself in wondering worship, in frequent doctrines big with unseen meaning, in mystic songs and prophecies, and above all in strange ceremonies and sacraments. What cannot be spoken the soul attempts to speak; what cannot be expressed the prophet tries to utter, both in word and action, and the result is he has to speak in mysterious parables and metaphors, and commit strange eccentricities. Thus when religion, in its expanding power, overspreads the spirit of man, its utterances and manifestations of growth find an efflorescence not only in sentiments and dogmas, but in sacraments and ceremonies, in feasts and festivals, in fasts and disciplines. According as nations are more or less gifted with profound aims, perceptions, and sentimentalities, these signs of inner development are more or less profuse. In the East, which is the land of metaphors and half-expressed spiritual affinities, these ceremonials are

necessarily many and deep. The Brahmo Somaj, therefore, when it recognises itself as the Church of the New Dispensation, and passes through the excitement of a divine guidance and *afflatus*, it cannot escape the process appointed by Providence in the case of all youthful inspired churches of embodying and accentuating its inner experiences in mystic language and primitive ceremonials. It would be unnatural, suicidal if, through an insane fear of misconstruction, we conceded to men, who stand on opposite platforms of secularism and infidelity, the precious, all-important privilege of yielding to the impulses of the inward breath. Any one who has studied the history of the spiritual development of the Brahmo Somaj will have observed the slowly advancing tides of inner life leaving behind them abundant doctrinal truth, personal piety, and the rich complex relations of a maturing church organization. From decade to decade has the course of religious progress extended; its varied stages have been fruitful of principles, sound, and widely applicable, leading on in incessant continuity to higher

harmonies and deeper philosophies till, at the present moment, the religion of the Brahmo Somaj reconciles the contradicting churches and systems of the world in the one supreme fact of an ever-growing Dispensation of truth and righteousness. The present state of our church is only the result of many foregoing stages. It is the product of innumerable principles and experiences, crystallizing themselves into a simple and universal creed, into an ever-deepening, loving worship, and into exalting and significant ceremonies.

It is, however, observed that in certain quarters the ceremonial observances of the Brahmo Somaj have awakened mistrust and fear. Some people seem to apprehend that ceremonies must lead to superstitions, and that religious rites of all kinds do savour more or less of idolatry. No doubt the practice of symbolism is fraught with perilous abuse, and the vessel of popular faith must be steered with great caution and skill, with great trust and reliance in Divine guidance to avoid the shipwreck of fatal errors. But

ceremonies and symbols, rites and observances of one kind or another, form very nearly the fundamentals upon which the structure of popular organization is upreared. Without them religion retires behind the arena of personal consciousness, and takes the form of esoteric abstractions, or refined sentimentalities, which cannot have the light of day, and freeze into absolute numbness. Unfortunately theism has, for many long years, been made to shiver in this pale polar light of isolated thought It is only of very late that our religion has ventured out into the warmth of day, and put forth its branching relations in the fulness of domestic and social life. It is only of late years that our religion has fructified in solemn observances and meaningful sacraments indicative of a spirit burdened with faith struggling to lay down the forms and laws of its inner development. If a violent restraint was put to check its normal growth at this season of its vigorous vitality, the results would very likely turn to be disastrous. Churches and congregations cannot do without some forms, rites, and symbols. If there is any

such church as has been able to dispense with all these, we should like it to come forward and publish itself. The question simply is the question of the *character* of the ceremonies. If it can be proved that any ceremony or sacrament of late, established in the Brahmo Somaj, tends to place a created object in the place of the Creator, or perpetuates the imputed sanctity of any outward symbol, we shall be prepared to repudiate that ceremony for ever. If any object, or rite, or man, can be proved to have been treated with divine honor, we shall be prepared to hold up such misconduct to deserved ridicule. But if, on the contrary, no such character has been accorded to these external observances which simply serve to weave sacred associations around the central fact of our faith, namely, the Theistic Dispensation, the clamour raised against the so-called ceremonialism of the day is a mere howl of ignorance. There are more ceremonies in one church than in another.

Professor Max Müller, writing to us on this subject, says: "As to leading an ascetic life, what harm is there in that? India is the very

country for leading an ascetic life, and a man does not there banish himself from society by it, as he would in Europe. Pilgrimages, too, singing in the open air and carrying flags, seem all as natural to those who know the true Indian life—not the life of Calcutta or Bombay—that I cannot see why people in England should be so shocked by what they call your vagaries. Because you carry a flag, which was the recognised custom among ancient religious leaders, you are accused of worshipping a flag. I am sure you do not pay half the worship to your flag which every English soldier does to his, which often becomes to him a real fetich; and yet a soldier, when he dies for his flag, is honored by the very people who now cry out against Keshub Chunder Sen, because he honors his flag as a symbol of his cause. If K. C. Sen insisted on other people doing exactly as he does, the case would be different. But he does not, and whatever you and I and others may feel about the importance of 'such things,' there never has been and there never will be a religion 'without a flag.' I wish it were not so; you probably wish it were

not so; but man cannot live on oxygen, he requires bread. These, however, are not the things of religion, but the very life and marrow of religion."

Nor is this all. The theism of the Brahmo Somaj has, from a long time, attempted to interpret the culture and conceptions of all great systems of faith. Its eclectic and constructive work embraces every department of spiritual development. We have tried to interpret the scriptures, doctrines, devotions, and prophets. The sanctifying illumining Spirit within interprets the scriptures. Faith adopts the substance of doctrines. The truly worshipping soul comprehends the significance of devotions. And idealized character only can comprehend the prophets. Besides all these there is the mystic world of ceremonialism. Neither research nor thought is adequate to express the hidden meaning of this form of religious culture. It often constitutes "the very life and marrow of religion," as Max Müller says. The soul in the suggestive attitude of ceremonialism can rightly interpret obscured and abused

ceremonies. Ritualism cannot last in the world we know. But the spirit which utters its spiritual conceptions through the senses in unfamiliar performances, and struggles to embody its infinite faith in acted hieroglyphics, must always continue. There is a language in words, and there is a deeper language in deeds. These constitute sacraments and ceremonials. The New Dispensation in ceremonial celebrations has tried to interpret their real significance. These ceremonials shall change, and in time grow less both in number and importance. But the spirit which has given them rise must ever reign and remain, discarding rites, but gathering the spiritual wealth that is in them.

Divine Maternity.

OF late it has become customary to address the Deity as Mother. It has always been the use of religious men to give unto God the title of Father. Certain classes of Mahometans only form an exception to this rule. A father's relation derives its warmth and vividness from the special, unusual, and unexpected acts of care and affection done towards his children. But it has always been a question with us as to whether the relation of motherhood is not at least as superior as this, And if these two relations are equally sacred and dignified, we cannot see any reason why one of them should be applied, and the other judged inapplicable to God. Properly speaking the Supreme Spirit can neither be our father, nor our mother. He is absolutely beyond these and all other human relations. "He neither begetteth nor is begotten. He says to a thing 'Be,' and it is." We in the littleness of our speech and conception, apply to Him names, and realize him in relations that are

most sacred and dear to our own hearts. And we know of no name, and no relation, dearer or more sacred than that of mother. If to us is given the privilege of applying to nameless and inexpressible blessedness any name which at best is a poor fragment of human language, nothing expresses our consciousness of that Divine goodness so deeply as the word mother. The relation of maternity is profoundly meaningful when viewed in reference to child-bearing and child-nursing. It is the highest type of humanity. On the other hand, the highest conception of a religious soul is the simplicity of childhood. True spirituality matures into the quiet sweetness and affectionate dependence of the tender child. And so it has been in the Brahmo Somaj. Let us examine the real state of man's life. Is he not dependent every moment of his existence upon forces other than his own? The course of his breath, the flow of his blood, his health, his life, his happiness all depend upon a combination of things which he did not create, and cannot control. The deep uncertainties, the strange

changefulness, the fearful unrealities and weaknesses of human life are proverbial. They supply the poet with his theme, the preacher with his motto, the fatalist with his fear, and the religious man with his resignation. Earthly relations to which dear names are applied in childhood are soon withdrawn for ever, but the dependence of life deepens, and encompasses human life unto its very end. Call him father by all means, in view of his creative and protective Divine agency, but in view of his endless tenderness and love, and the endless dependence we have to repose upon him amidst the varied trials of life, no name is fitter to be applied to the Deity than the name mother.

It is a significant fact that the two greatest religions of the world have deified the relation of motherhood in a most practical manner. The Christian Madonna, and the Amba of the Hindus, are the most profound and effective conceptions of the Divine Motherhood. The forgiveness of the sinner, the ministry of the diseased, the sufferings of the poor, the consolation of the bereaved, the care of orphans, and

the raising of the fallen, are all tenderly entrusted to the Divine Mother by the Hindu and Christian alike. The Divine Mother is conceived as looking upon the sorrowful world with a sweet pity, the profoundness of which is unspeakable. As mother, the grace of God assumes a vividness, a sweetness, a presence of sympathy and participation, a blending of affectionateness and care, most needful to the circumstances and troubles of the stricken man. The word mother to a Hindu is a magical name. When the pangs of disease overpower him, his faint moanings shape out the word "mother" in imperfect utterance. When long-expected relief succeeds grief and misery, the released feelings find their vent in exclaiming the word "mother." When sudden danger paralyses every faculty and feeling, his bewilderment breaks forth in the word "mother." In heart-rending woe, in the intensity of grief which takes away the breath of the heart and the speech of the tongue, the word "mother" only is left to the Hindu to pour out his oppressed nature. Motherhood then, is a mine of infinite meaning to our nation.

And to whom is it more fitly applicable than to the Supreme Spirit of Love that finds its transcendent embodiment in the relation of motherhood? If it were not so, the most expressive of human religions would not cling for ever, as they do, to the conception of the motherly love of God. Could we but exalt and deify the meaning of the word mother into a relationship with the all-spreading love of God, the trust and tender regard in his sweet Providence would overflow every corner and every relation of human existence, at least in this country. The seeking, searching, weeping, forgiving, unceasing love of a devoted mother ends not when the more impartial and upright affection of the father is defeated and dried up by the frequent recurrence of guilt and degradation in the life of the depraved child. Support and nourishment, food and water, milk and raiment, come for the prodigal in the wilderness from the bounty of the mother's love, while the indulgent father is alienated by rebellious sonship. And if such a motherhood could be identified with the far-reaching Providence of

God that shines and rains upon the virtuous and wicked alike, who could desert the bosom of the heavenly Mother? If, then, in the midst of our hardened guilt and deep ungratefulness, we do need a forgiveness that is greater than our sin, a love that is greater than our rebellion, a tenderness that can melt the stone in our nature, a present help that suffices for us in disease, in disaster, in misery, and wickedness, and death, we are justified by our human relations in calling God our Mother in heaven.

The relations of men and women, in spite of so much boasted progress in religion and morality, still retain their unsanctity. The Divine soul involves within its perfections the sweetest tenderness of woman, transforms the whole feminine nature, and changes its ordinary relations with the sterner sex. If all women could be viewed as incarnations of the motherhood of God, feminine beauty, refinement, and affection would become holier objects than they now are. When the imagined character of Mary has done so much to crown

the weaker sex with sanctity and tenderness, and changed the character of woman so largely in Christian countries, the real and infinite maternity of God, if genuinely perceived and adored, cannot fail to impart still greater sanctity and heavenliness to the character and relations of women in general. Few things are so well calculated to explain and exalt the peculiarities of the spiritual constitution of woman as the faith that these peculiarities come from the hidden sources of the soul of God. When the eternal Spirit, infinite Beauty, timeless, formless, sexless Love becomes the Mother of all mothers, reigns as Ideal Womanhood, all women partake of that divine nature, and man looks upon woman as gifted with a deeper and tenderer divinity than what he himself possesses. These various considerations force upon us the necessity of the distinctive recognition of God in the capacity of our blessed Mother. Our relation with God has naturally sweetened and ripened into that of the child to its mother. It is felt as the most popular and most sacred of all relations. Wisdom, truth,

holiness, love, celestial tranquillity, spiritual force and depth, the light, the rapture, the glory of the soul, come to the devoted worshipper as comes the mother's sweet milk to the mouth of the babe who rests upon her. The exercises of devotion and contemplation, of prayer and faith, are no more than the processes of drawing sustenance by the spirit from the Parent-Spirit. And does not that sustenance suffice for life and death ? God as Mother shall rule in our hearts, in our homes, and in our church, drawing men and women together as one holy family. This is the faith of advanced Theism.

The Language of the New Dispensation

PROFOUND reverence of language and attitude is essential in all practices of religion. True devotions should be full of the most sacred solemnity. Frivolity and irreverence have no part in religion. The conception of Divine presence, providence, and personality, if familiarized too much and unwisely, may, in the case of individuals who have not reached the stage of ideal progress, degenerate into blasphemy and incurable profanity, from which the mind recoils with natural displeasure. And we believe this feeling lies at the root of the antagonism that has been shown by some friends against a number of our devotional utterances, doctrinal developments, and practical proceedings. But one fact cannot be too well borne in mind by religious thinkers. Human religion has struggled between two extremes of personal attitude towards the action of the Divine personality. One of these is irreverence and cant, and the other is a false, cold, distant reverence. This affected solemnity discharges

Providence from the direction of all personal life, and relegates man's conduct to the rule of that carnality and worldliness, or at best to that cold conventional morality to be saved, from which so many formal and sentimental prayers are daily offered. This evil, the magnitude of which cannot be too forcibly pointed out, is entirely lost sight of by the religious world. Hollow grand verbosity, esthetic platitudes, and sonorous phrases are prescribed to mark the attitude in which man should approach the footstool of the Eternal; postures are practised; the cathedral life of the devotee is imposing, but the unapproachable Presence is locked up in the shrine when the worshipper retires to the daily avocations of actual existence. The mind retains perhaps a faint aroma of the incense and glory shed around in the temple, but has nothing but poor prudence, and withered conventionalism to keep it company in the heat and crowd of the world. The divine Personality is choked in doctrines and rituals, in choruses and solemnities, which are far removed, and exceedingly unlike the vulgar

and perplexing trifles of life. The ordinary half-hearted language of ecclesiastical performances interposes an immense and insurmountable distance between a ruling Providence and man's actual life. It is a vanity and a snare. It is a covert insult to God. We gain nothing by holding as an article of religious philosophy the doctrine of divine personality. If we cannot address God in real perplexities, address him as the father who is present before us. And between the evil of profane familiarity on the one hand, and the evil of cold agnostic formalism on the other, we do not know which is most condemnable. From what has been said some may be led to infer that we direct our strictures only to the *expressions* used towards the Supreme Being. But we mean to criticize the spirit, the attitude of the mind. Devotional language forms the subject of criticism only as an index to the spirit. We can neither honor the Infinite by very elaborate and high-sounding phrases, nor need there be any fear of dishonoring him if we approach his unspeakable pre-

sence with such artless simple words, provided they be true, as form the heart's secret language. On the contrary we feel that the ordinary use of correct esthetic phraseology, and theological inanities, which so seldom go to meet the real difficulties of sin and temptation, is much more truly offensive to the all-witnessing Majesty of Heaven than the homely language that flows from the heart outright, and is ignorant of the policies and proprieties of the world.

The language and expressions in which men set forth their convictions therefore do not make much difference. The spirit in which language is used is all in all. Mere thoughtfulness, however eccentric and unpalatable, is easily tolerated—nay, it gains the reputation of being original. Sentimentality, however unusual, obscure or striking, is also allowed, and would get praised as so much poetry. But directly you talk as one who has real faith in anything, you are set down as a mad man. The world cannot bear that any one should learn directly from God his purposes and will,

and speak as one who has authority to speak. If you make the intellect your authority, men do not find fault with you. If your imaginations and feelings be your recommendation, still men would not blame you, but, on the contrary, praise you, and accept your utterances with readiness. But as soon as you say that you have the voice and sanction of Providence in what you say, the whole world becomes your enemy, and you are denounced as a blasphemer and a peace-breaker. This has been so always in the past, and this is just as much so in the present. The world can bear everything, but it cannot bear the language of genuine faith and inspiration. Men have preferred not to be atheists, but to believe in a God whom however they would keep at a safe distance, so that their plans and purposes may not be interrupted. For a long time the Brahmo Somaj conformed to this rule of religious respectability. But when faith, in the dealings and counsels of a special Providence, began to have firmer and deeper hold upon the hearts of Brahmo leaders, and they felt that

both they and their movement were under the operation of a personal guidance from the spirit of God, the expressions of their belief and principle changed, and they began to use words and ideas that gave offence by the nearness they indicated of the human to the divine. Now this nearness is continually increasing, and the Brahmo Somaj is slowly unfolding a whole literature of devotions very different from the old Sanscrit, and the cold English. But before men accuse us of religious solecism, let them first present to us the universal syntax of piety, which all men may understand and practise. We are not for vulgarity, we are for simplicity in the language of prayer. Sensational language we abjure. The true language of the heart's aspirations we desire, be it high-sounding, be it humble and homely. This is a matter of spirit, as well as taste and culture. Tastes may differ, but the spirit alone can judge. The New Dispensation is spirit and culture combined. We must not say that our devotional language has reached its perfection. But we trust to no conventional model—domestic or foreign. It has

been our custom to speak out of the simplicity of our hearts. And we firmly believe that, along with other practices, the language of the New Dispensation, by the fulness and maturity of Divine grace, will, in time, adequately represent the Spirit who utters himself through our church.

The Conclusion.

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WE feel, while closing these pages, that the sketch we have given of the faith and progress of the Brahmo Somaj is insufficient. We would fain have said more. One or two very important doctrines we have not taken up at all. The great subject of Sin and Atonement has been omitted. The still greater subject of Immortality has not been treated separately. Our relations to Christ and Christianity have been passed over in silence. But the Brahmo Somaj is still in the height of development, and the measure of discussion that suffices for to-day fails to represent the facts and progress of to-morrow. Let our growth in the inner sanctification, and the undying life of the spirit, warrant an authoritative declaration of doctrine on these and other matters, and we shall speak out. Of intellectual and sentimental declamation there has been enough. Controversial labyrinths we have carefully avoided, and kept all personalities in the background. If spared, we hope to supplement known omissions and un-

conscious deficiencies by a fuller representation of faith in future. For the present we look up to the indulgence of the public, while offering before it this our first contribution towards describing the principles and progress of the Brahmo Somaj.







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